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## Sketch

## In the bullring with Sir Bernard



Simon Hoggart

PEOPLE are often edgy before they appear in front of select committees, so while we waited I asked Sir Bernard Ingham if he was nervous. "No!" he shouted. "Why should I be?" And he was right. It was the members of the Public Administration Committee who ought to have been quaking. Sir Bernard set about them with a will.

His face was red, and it jutted aggressively forward. Sometimes his nose almost hit the desk in front of him, reminiscent of a bull lowering its head to charge.

He waved his arms about, like a semaphorist whose wife has just run off with a Portuguese sailor. His magnificent, rooconey eyebrows bristled independently of his facial expressions, as if they were communicating vital extra information to those who could read it. ("Help! I am a Peruvian guinea pig trapped inside Sir Bernard Ingham's forehead" perhaps.)

The point about Margaret Thatcher, for whom Sir Bernard used to work as press officer, was that it was a terrible strain just being her. Nobody could keep it up 24 hours a day. Sir Bernard took over the role of Mrs Thatcher when she was just too tired. Yesterday he played the part to perfection.

A few of the MPs, neophytes for the most part, asked why he had made a practice of being offensive about cabinet ministers during his briefings. Wasn't that dirty work?

"I don't think that was dirty work! I was trying to bring some rationality to the argument. Pym [Francis Pym,

whom he once famously compared to Mrs Menzies of ITMA] had made a deeply gloomy speech. The Lobby wondered how such a man could remain in the Cabinet."

He wished he hadn't said what he did "because I got a reputation for rubbishing ministers... nowadays, ministers are systematically rubbished before they get their feet under the table."

But the MPs asked, hadn't he said some nasty things about them?

"I'm not sure they were nasty," he roared.

"Ministers aren't exactly a compliment, is it?"

"Well, he was a Very Gloomy Person!" Sir Bernard shot back, as if Christopher Robin had decided it was time to give Eeyore a bloody good kicking.

But the person who must have felt most unhappy at this performance was, surely, Alastair Campbell, the present spokesman at Number 10. Mr Campbell is a great admirer of Sir Bernard, regarding him as a cynosure and role model.

Sadly, the compliment is not returned. Sir Bernard raged about Mr Campbell's operations, complaining that he had no right to get his salary from the taxpayer and warning against his favouritism to particular newspapers ("this government will reap the whirlwind"). "I just wonder what is going on. They are media-obsessed."

Heaven despatched their bleepers. "I never had one. If there was bad news, it found me soon enough." As for the press, they had become, since May 1 last year, "poodles."

He stormed out of the room, his face purple, red and brown, but with a large, satisfied smile.

Later, Ann Widdecombe made her debut as Tory health spokesperson, with a ferocious, spittle-flecked attack on Frank Dobson. He didn't seem too worried. Ms Widdecombe's passionate rage is attractive in a back-bench rebel; faintly embarrassing in a shadow minister.

## Review

## Private pain with political garnish

Michael Billington

Love You, Too  
Bush Theatre

DOUG Lucie's new play is set between the general election nights of 1992 and 1997. But it works more as a waspish comedy of modern manners in the style of his earlier Bush hits, such as *Hard Feelings* and *Progress*, than as overtly political drama: it is highly entertaining without ever forging a decisive link between private lives and public values.

Lucie presents us with four characters whose lives constantly interconnect. Ros is a go-getting estate agent whose relationship with a faintly nerdy colleague, Jim, rises and falls in the course of the Major years.

But the moral epitome of that confused, unhappy period is her best friend Shelley, who shacks up with a sincere, socialist rock-musician, Mick, uses him for procreation and then goes her own selfish way.

On one level, Lucie is writing about contrasting ideas of friendship: men are always driven by a genetically-inspired competitiveness, while women have an intuitive kinship.

Ros may use Shelley like a skivvy and be jealous of her fertility, and Shelley may be a screwed-up sponger, but they share a sisterly union that survives personal treachery and the loss of their partners.

As a piece of social observation, the play is often sharp and funny. Mick has the authentic rock musician's contempt for Jim's Blairite love of such groups as Oasis and UB40. Ros, with her mobile phones and self-improvement, also views with a mixture of envy and dismay Shelley's sexual freedom and ability to erase her past. Lucie records what he sees with a mordant accuracy.

I just wish he pushed his political point more strongly. In one sense, he is writing about characters who are largely indifferent to public events. But he also implies that Shelley represents post-Thatcherite selfishness, Mick doomed socialism, and Ros and Jim the kind of disillusioned Tory yuppies who lately drifted towards New Labour. But you feel political events are used as a decorative garnish on a play that is really about female friendship.

For all its use of election-night videos as structural bookends, somewhere inside there is a much more pungent and directly political play struggling to get out.

Mike Bradwell's production, neatly designed by Es Devlin, contains alert performances from Susannah Doyle as the mercilessly selfish Shelley, Miranda Foster as the envious Ros, Reece Dinadale as the would-be laddish Jim and Sam Graham as the socialist guitarist, Mick. This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

Lottery operator's announcement of big profits and pay increases prompts warning from regulator

## Camelot bosses win again

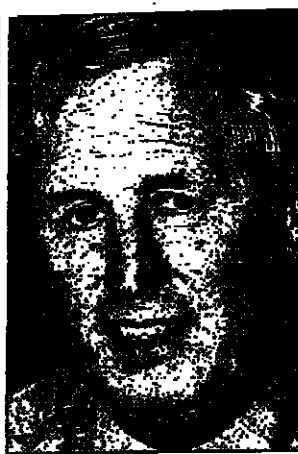
Nick Hopkins

CAMELOT faced a barrage of criticism yesterday after announcing record profits of almost £81 million and big pay rises for its directors.

The National Lottery operator, chastened by the 'fat-cat' row which followed last year's accounts, stressed that more money was being channelled into good causes than ever before. But the figures staggered Church leaders and provoked MPs into renewed calls for changes to the way the lottery is run.

In an unusual step, the lottery regulator Oflot warned Camelot that its money-making days were numbered.

"If the licence was renewed tomorrow, then Camelot would not win the tender," said a spokesman. "We would choose a company which is not going to make such large profits. I don't think anybody realised just how much money could be made when



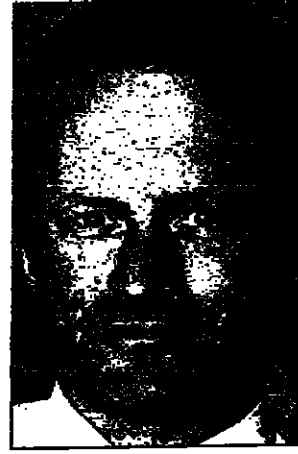
Tim Holley: Salary rose to £636,000 from £590,000

the lottery was set up. Everybody seriously underestimated its potential."

Yesterday's figures underlined the extent to which the lottery has become a cash-cow since it was introduced in November 1994. Camelot's sales topped £5 billion last year, and more than £2.7 billion

"If the licence was renewed tomorrow, then Camelot would not win the tender. We would choose a company which is not going to make such large profits"

— Oflot spokesman



Peter Murphy: Pay rose by 19 per cent, to £429,000

was handed out in prizes. The company increased the amount given to good causes by 23 per cent — to £1.56 billion — and the Treasury received £708 million from lottery duty, tax and VAT.

However, it was the overall pre-tax profit of £80.9 million, an increase of 14 per cent, and

Murphy's rose to £429,000 — a 19 per cent rise. Two years ago Mr Holley was earning £365,000.

David Rigg, the former communications director whose 90 per cent rise last year caused a furore, was paid £284,000. Mr Rigg resigned in September last year.

Staff have been told they will be entitled to an extra year's salary if they stay with Camelot until its licence expires in 2001 and the company hits its targets.

Camelot admitted the last 12 months had not been a complete success. Sales of instant scratchcards dropped 9 per cent to £801 million and TV Dreams, a scratchcard linked to a BBC gameshow, flopped.

But Mr Murphy was bullish. "We will always be accused of making too much profit. I think our profits are absolutely reasonable. The amount of money paid to the directors is an old story."

Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, refused to be drawn into the row. A spokesman

said Mr Smith regarded the matter as "closed", following last year's showdown with the company, which resulted in Camelot's highest earners pledging to donate some money to charity.

It was left to backbenchers to lead the attack. John Manton, a Labour member of the culture, media and sport Commons select committee, said all the money from the lottery should go to good causes and it was "mythology" to claim Camelot staff needed big salaries.

Labour MP Diana Organ said: "By the time the lottery licence comes up, most of Camelot's executives will be able to retire anyway. The salaries and bonuses they are awarding themselves are their pension plans."

The Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Rev Richard Harries, chairman of the Church of England's board for social responsibility, said: "There is a spiritual damage being done to the country by the lottery and these big profits bring this to the fore again."



Brecon Street in Liverpool, now filled with rubble, where 5,000 cobblestones were stolen by thieves PHOTOGRAPH: PETER BYRNE

## No road ahead — it's just been stolen

Luke Harding

IN THE grand scale of things, Brecon Street in Liverpool was a modest kind of road. Enclosed by walls, and leading nowhere in particular, the street had one distinguishing feature: its fine blue granite cobblestones. Until that is, a gang with a digger pulled them up, loaded them into a wagon and drove off.

The unusual theft was discovered by mechanic Bob Barlow when he turned up at his garage premises. The thieves had left two cobblestones behind — almost as a souvenir — but had taken away the other 5,000 or so that made up the 100ft by 12ft road.

"I'm gobsmacked," said Mr Barlow, who runs the MGM garage on what is now Roader Street industrial estate. "It was just as you imagine it, a fully cobbled street. On Saturday afternoon it was there, on Monday morning it wasn't. The whole lot is gone."

"When I drove on to the estate there was no road, so I had to brake quite hard. I said to myself, 'What's going on here?' I thought the council must have been working on it — but then I thought they'd been a bit enthusiastic. Then the penny dropped and I realised someone had stolen it."

The villains are believed to have spent four hours on Sunday morning digging up the cobblestones. Neighbours in the nearby Kensington housing estate heard a bit

of muffled drilling, but assumed the noise was emanating from the garage, which is part of a small, isolated industrial estate. Yesterday police were investigating a tip-off to their crimestoppers hotline and conducting door-to-door inquiries.

"We are following up a line of inquiry," a Merseyside police spokesman said cautiously. "It is too early to speak of arrests."

Officially, Brecon Street had not existed for some time. Liverpool city council yesterday said the highway had been closed in 1977, and now has the lowly status of a private road.

Mr Barlow was yesterday forced to lay rubble where the cobblestones used to be in an attempt to let his business and others around him carry on trading. "It was almost certainly done to order," he said.

"The stones themselves are very expensive and weigh quite a bit so they must have been here some time taking them out. They could be worth as much as £10,000."

"I'm thinking about breaking up the two remaining bricks and selling them as mementoes."

Though their rarity alone could decline, there are still about 20 cobbled streets in Liverpool, virtually all of them unadopted, which could fall victim to the cobble thieves. And such thefts are not unique. "It has happened before, though I can't say how often," according to a police spokesman.

## The brothers Snow fall out over mother (again)

'I was ruthless in my refusal to make sacrifices to care for her. Guilt wrestled with reality, as we searched for a home.'

continued from page 1 society. Most of us must face it some day."

Even now he would not consider allowing his mother move into his house because coping with her Alzheimer's disease would consume time which he could not afford.

Mr Snow said his feelings had nothing to do with the controversy two years ago when he blamed his mother's coldness and lack of affection for his inability to form close relationships.

He will deliver the keynote speech this afternoon at the

annual meeting of the charity Counsel and Care. The Duchess of Gloucester and 500 charity workers will be in the audience at Church House, Westminster.

His brother, a regional officer with the health union Unison, said: "This is all middle class crap about the inner person. I've got no sympathy with the idea that this is a great occasion for guilt."

"Our mother is wonderfully cared for. We combed seven counties to find that home. It's absolutely marvellous. The whole regime is intended

to retain what vestige of normality is left. Her short-term memory is gone but she is part of the [home's] social life. It makes her more a fully human person."

He said the Channel 4 anchorman knew it was the best option.

"There's no way any of the family had the ability to look after her."

The brothers clashed two years ago when Jon Snow published a memoir, in the anthology *Mothers and Sons*, accusing his mother of being cold and undemonstrative. He

recalled his horror at the age of eight when told by his father, the Bishop of Whithy, that his mother was bald. The revelation "undermined my confidence in who she really was," he wrote.

His brother condemned the memoir in a letter to the Guardian. "I cannot see how anything in his childhood can now justify the humiliation of our mother, whose memory of these times has been wiped out."

"It is simply pitiless. Self-indulgence has gained the upper hand over decency."



Jon Snow: family conflicts



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# The most secret crime

The NSPCC team bluntly named 23 men and women who had been identified to them as abusers at Witherwack during the 1970s and 1980s

## The man who fought for the

In the second part of our four-day special investigation, **Nick Davies** uncovers the truth behind an appalling scandal at the heart of a social services department

**The most secret crime**

N COLIN SMART'S secret history, the most significant hard facts are the ones that have emerged most recently. Last August, the NSPCC completed an inquiry into the care of children at a council home in Sunderland, where Smart had once been Director of Social Services, called Witherwack House. They produced a detailed report, which was confidential, but the Guardian has obtained a copy.

The NSPCC team bluntly named 23 men and women who had been identified to them as abusers who had physically and sexually assaulted children during the 1970s and 1980s. Their report noted the frequency with which particular names occurred and the way in which different witnesses, including a former member of staff, independently described some of the same incidents. "These allegations are consistent in nature," they commented.

They described, for example, the care worker who had sex regularly with a 14-year-old girl with the eventual result that she had had to have an abortion; the boy who had been burned across the back with a heated metal tray; the string of boys who had been used for sex by a woman worker; the boy who had been beaten with a snooker cue; the boy who had been kicked by a man wearing heavy boots; the apparently endless beatings and punishments; the numerous times that children had been pinned to the floor with their arms stretched high above their heads; the two different

boys who complained that staff had incited an older boy called Darren Rowe to rape them; the supervising officer who had failed, over and over again, to heed the complaints. They described, too, two girls who, from the ages of eight and seven, had become sex objects for one particular care worker who used to bend them over a bed and rape them every week or so. Both of those two girls, now young women in their 20s, have been haunted by the experience. One has lost the ability to cry.

The other obsessively cuts the flesh on her arms and occasionally tries to kill herself. In an account of her abuse, she wrote: "I felt I was just put on this earth to suffer."

The NSPCC team made it clear that the responsibility for this went beyond the abusers. "It seems regrettably impossible to avoid the conclusion that, during at least some of the time that Witherwack was open, Sunderland City Council did not meet its legal duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of at least some, and possibly many of the children and young people who lived there."

Now, go back in search of the first hard fact in this hidden story, to April 1991, when an astute local reporter, Nigel Green, heard about a woman care worker who had been sacked by Sunderland City Council for some kind of sexual assault on a boy who was in her care in a council home called Witherwack. In search of confirmation, he sent a fax to Sunderland City Council, whose press officer took it to

the man who had recently taken over the city's social services department — Colin Smart.

Smart had been in the job for only two months and he belonged to none of the tribes that run politics in the north east — the Catholics in Jarrow who settle politics in the social club after Sunday mass, the masons who recruit councillors and officers from every local authority in the region, the Labour party who are so strong that they can run a city like Sunderland as a one-party state.

A senior official who worked in the council says that Smart reacted swiftly to the fax. He called a meeting of officials and, although he was not able to uncover much detail, he established very soon that this woman had indeed been sacked; furthermore that two other care workers at Witherwack, both men, had also been sacked at the same time, that this had all happened more than three years earlier in October 1987; and, most significant, that the police had never been told. Smart was obviously alarmed — the failure to tell the police was not only improper but arguably unlawful. He was also frustrated because, for reasons which were not then clear, he was unable to find out any of the detail about what had happened.

Most of those who were at the meeting assumed Smart would now follow the well-beaten path to the door of the various councillors who controlled the city, and that they would make sure that the affair was kept within their con-



Guiltily... Care workers Kevin Roffe and Glynis Tamblin who received suspended sentences of 12 months each



PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE SCOTT

trol. However, they did not know their man. Now, instead of going to the councillors, Smart went straight to the police.

He triggered a crisis which was to unfold with increasing force over the next 10 months as he fought to uncover the truth, while powerful figures in the council resisted him.

Smart set up a small team of officials from his department with an instruction to find out the whole truth about the three sacked workers. Those around Smart feared he was politically weak. He

did, it was alarming. His team reported a cluster of complaints of beatings and indecent assault against various workers, not only the three who had been sacked. The workers were said to have attacked girls and boys in the home and also to have encouraged older children to batter smaller ones who caused trouble. A 14-year-old boy was said to have conducted a campaign of sexual assault on other children while social workers took no action to stop him.

More than that, the team reported, the home had adopted a regime of systematic physical abuse, whose methods were an uncomfortable echo of the "pin-down" scandal which had just erupted in Staffordshire. Difficult children were violently restrained and locked in an empty room for days at a time. And the evidence suggested that this culture of violence enjoyed the approval of some councillors — which appeared to explain why Smart had found it so difficult to uncover its details. When Smart now met with his team, the position was clear: four years earlier, the

council had sacked the three staff for cruelty and sexual assaults during a summer camp, and had then not only failed to tell the police but had also failed to take any steps to discover whether these three might have been involved in other incidents or whether other care workers might also have committed offences. Once again Smart acted without giving the councillors a chance to intervene. He went back to the police and told them what his team had discovered, and then he went right to the top — to the De-

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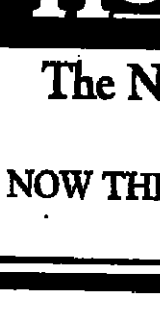
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Guardian Wednesday June 3 1998  
team bluntly named  
women who had  
ed to them as  
Witherwack during  
nd 1980s

The Guardian Wednesday June 3 1998

# The most secret crime

## abused and was gagged

The police had stopped their inquiries. The council stopped theirs. No one was blamed. And Colin Smart could not even open his mouth to complain

partment of Health in London to ask for the Social Services Inspectorate to mount a special and urgent inquiry into Witherwack and other homes in Sunderland.

These decisions, according to a senior figure, provoked an undeclared war in the city council, with some councillors and officials now colluding to find a way to remove Smart from his job. There was nothing discreet about some of the fighting. At one point, a councillor distributed around the building some beer mats which were supposed to promote a campaign against drinking and driving; the councillor had scratched out the message and left only the headline slogan — "Get Smart!"

As soon as he had found out about the regime of violence at Witherwack, Smart had ordered it to stop. But as the weeks went by, Smart was informed that the violence in Witherwack had not ended. Indeed, the evidence was that it had got worse. Furthermore, he was told that after he had instructed staff to change the regime, the home had been told behind his back and without proper authority to carry on as before.

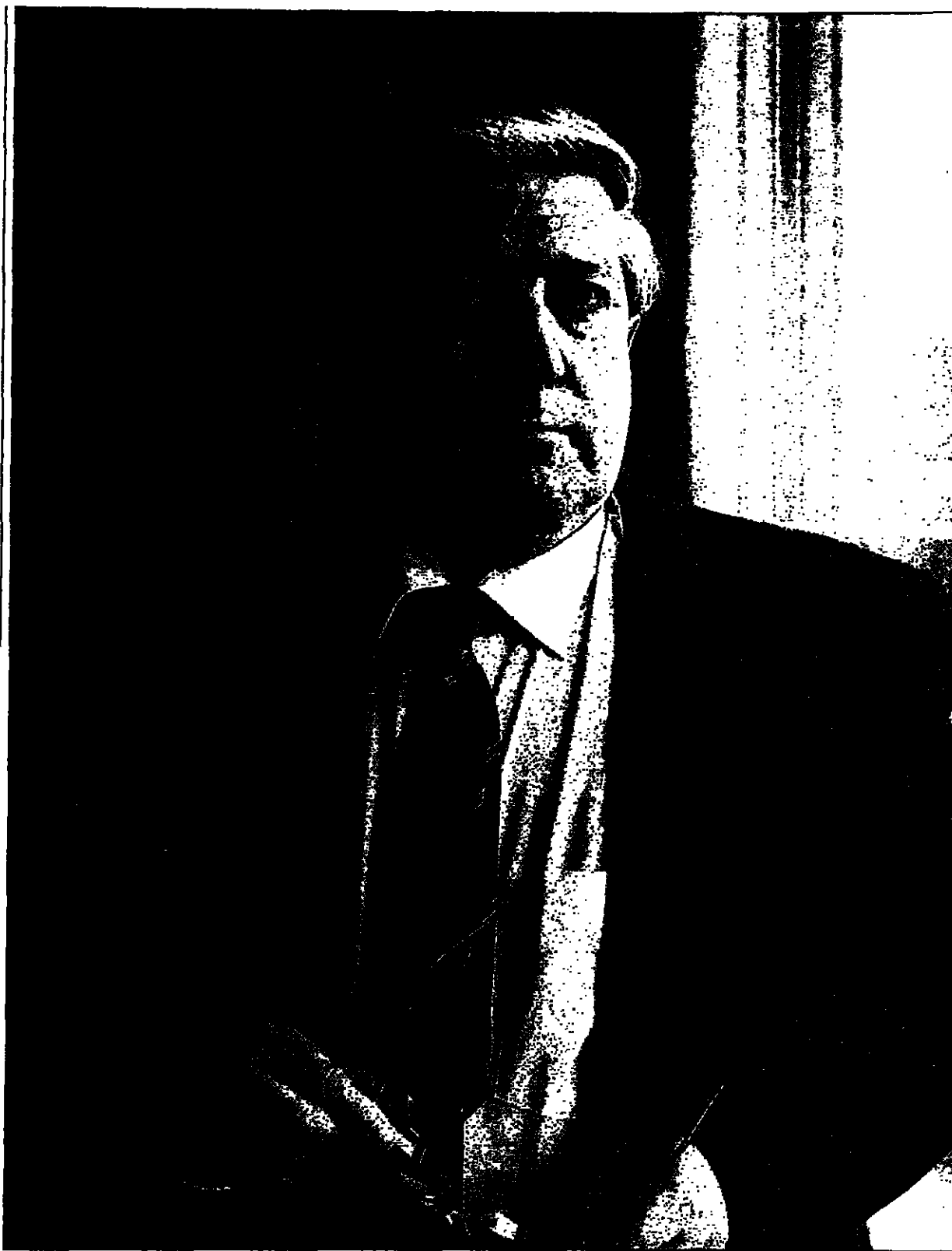
Smart told his team to travel

ing, of incomplete records, poor buildings and weak management.

Eight months later, Smart wrote an article for the Guardian, headlined *Kids in Crisis*, in which he disclosed none of the facts about Sunderland but expressed the feelings of a man who had spent his career in a system which, he now believed, was damaging the very people it was supposed to be helping. "It is debatable," he wrote, "whether the majority of children now in residential care have been more harmed by the circumstances which brought them into the system, or by their time with social services."

Having reached this point of despair, Smart had no moral alternative but to fight on. He took his long list of possible victims and abusers to the chief executive. He took, too, a short list of named individuals whose continued interference in council business, he argued, would mean that children in the city's care would never be free of abuse — not because they themselves were child abusers but simply because they were playing politics with the welfare of the children.

And he issued an ultimatum: the council must re-investigate his long list of worrying inci-



Silenced... Colin Smart was sued by his ex-employer Sunderland City Council

PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL DIXON

blows between two lines of other children. The jury heard of the boy who had been brought back after running away and been made to eat cigarette butts off the floor before being given his dose of power punches; of the staff whose training consisted of being told, "Shut your gob and watch your arse".

The proceedings were liberally scattered with hints of official collusion. June Parker, a nurse who had worked at the home, said, "I think even the civic centre knew what was happening". One of the accused had told police: "I am guilty of silence. I needed a job." The trial judge damned the council: "You may think the conditions at Witherwack were appalling and the policy not to employ trained staff in 1985 unfortunate. You may ask why conditions were so bad or why this behaviour which clearly was criminal was not reported to the police earlier." He answered his own question: "The reason for the delay was the hope on the part of the council that the case would never be resurrected. The evidence proves that the council were inept and happy that the problem would simply disappear."

At the end of the trial, one of

yers would file suit. And, almost unseen, a strange thing began to happen. Each time that one of the former victims made a move, another victim emerged to give support. Two of them were already suing the council. As they moved forward, three others came forward to join them. When they succeeded, winning a total of £23,000 from a council which still refused to admit liability, more came forward.

There was the girl who had been sent to Witherwack when her mother died, who had done her best for a few years until one day, when she was eight years old, one of the careworkers had walked her into her room, stripped off her knickers and raped her. The man enjoyed this so much that he fell to repeating the experience every week or so. There was the man who, as an eight-year-old, had been continually roughed up and hassled by a chair of the council, who eventually devised a cunning new torture, by inciting an older boy to bugger him. Twenty six former residents joined together to fight.

They went to the Sunderland Echo who backed them with a series of tough stories and set

The NSPCC found that a care worker had had sex with a girl aged 14

The most secret crime

Staff incited an older boy called Darren Rowe to rape other children

The most secret crime

back through the files to see whether there were any other signs of unchecked abuse — unexplained injuries, or unresolved complaints or any pattern of allegation around any particular care worker.

In the meantime, he had the police — led by an outstanding detective named David Wilson — and the Social Services Inspectorate digging out the truth. Towards the end of the year, the SSI produced a first draft of their report in which they confirmed that Witherwack House had been running "a repressive regime" with "inappropriate and high levels of physical restraint and a failure to protect children from abuse". It added: "Inspectors read on file and were told by children of a number of incidents where restraint seemed to border on assault."

A month later, at the end of January 1993, Smart's small team reported back to him the results of their general trawl through the files. The result was devastating. They had found signs of systematic mismanagement, of consistent failure to heed complaints and they had produced a list of suspicious incidents which had apparently not been handled properly. It covered just about every children's home in the city, it identified more than 50 girls and boys as possible victims of physical and sexual violence and some 30 staff as possible abusers. Smart had uncovered a scandal.

In their draft report, the SSI, too, had seen signs of structural weakness, complaining of the staff's inadequate training,

public statement, underlining his confidence in him. Nevertheless, shortly afterwards, for whatever reason, Wilson was moved off the inquiry.

The Social Services Inspectorate was neutralised. Their report was published and accepted in February 1992, but by then the council had commissioned its own report from a retired civil servant named Evelyn Cassam. When he published his findings, in May 1992, he confirmed the problems, criticised the council's failure to deal with them but, crucially, he strongly advised the council not to dig out the history of abuse. This "picking over the bones" would be bad for morale, Cassam said, and it would distract resources away from current abuse. The most that they might do, he suggested, was to set up a hotline. Following his advice, the council stopped all attempts to dig out the truth. Ignoring his advice,

vice, they did not set up a hotline.

Colin Smart, however, did not give up. At home in the autumn of 1992, he prepared his own five-volume report and in December he sent them off to the police, the SSI, the Department of Health and the Secretary of State, who was then Virginia Bottomley.

Mrs Bottomley wrote back to thank him. Smart passed a message to the council to say that he would be happy to discuss the reports. Instead, they issued a writ for breach of confidence, complaining that he was using confidential information and potentially perverting the course of justice in the trial of the three care workers. They said he must surrender all of his information, undertake not to disclose it to anyone else and pay them damages.

But an internal memo about Smart, marked private and confidential, which has been seen by The Guardian, makes it clear that the council had another, rather different reason for gagging him. By this time, two former residents of Witherwack were suing the council. According to the memo to senior councillors, written by the director of administration, Colin Langley: "The solicitors acting for our insurers in respect of the claims by former residents of Witherwack, are concerned about the effect upon the conduct of those cases and the implications for further claims. I have, therefore, agreed with them that High Court proceedings be taken against Mr Smart for the return of any documents and to restrain him from any further publication of council documents."

Smart went to court in March 1993, indignant that the council were using public money to keep the public in the dark. His lawyers warned the court that this was a perversion of the course of justice. The judge hesitated and the two sides struck a deal. Smart would hand over his information and sign an undertaking not to discuss publicly what he knew, the council would drop their demand for damages and let him off with paying £5,000 towards their costs. Smart was now gagged. A couple of opposition councillors called it a cover-up. So did the Sunderland Echo. The council were unmoved.

One small part of the truth was revealed in October 1993, when the three sacked workers from Witherwack finally found themselves in the dock. The court heard how staff had given the children "speedies" (knicker-punches to the head) and power punches to the body, how they had made them run a gauntlet of kicks and

the accused was acquitted but the other two care workers, Kevin Roffe and Glynnis Tamm, were convicted and given suspended sentences of 12 months each. And that was it. If the judge wanted to know why the council had concealed this crime for three years and allowed the poor conditions to persist so long, no one was about to tell him.

It was not that the council did nothing. The new director of Social Services acted on just about every recommendation that was made to him. Nevertheless, the council left the dark heart — the history of child abuse in their homes — untouched. The SSI were long gone (and several of their inspectors were now working for the council). The police had stopped their inquiries. The council had stopped theirs. No one was blamed. And Colin Smart could not even open his mouth to complain.

There was, however, just one loose end. The children. By now, they had grown up. Some had found work and settled down. Others had bounced from one kind of trouble to another: one wing of Wakefield Prison housed three former residents of Witherwack. None of them had forgotten. Some of them had tried, but none of them had succeeded. And every so often, one of them would feel a surge of pain and go to the police to make a statement or to a lawyer to make a claim for compensation. The police would make inquiries and say there was not enough evidence. The law-

up a hotline for survivors. They went out into the street and gathered signatures. They marched on the city hall. They set up more legal actions.

One quiet night, a small group of them turned up on Colin Smart's doorstep and asked for his help. Even though the police had gagged, he agreed to write to the Secretary of State.

The council resisted. The new director of Social Services said it had all been investigated already. The new vice-chair of the council, a Labour councillor, said: "This is not a case of new evidence but a case of new publicity." But the former residents of the children's home kept pushing and eventually, in April last year, they persuaded the council to ask the NSPCC to conduct an inquiry.

When they delivered their report, the NSPCC advised that the council should admit publicly that children had been abused and should express their formal regret.

The City Council called a press conference at which the director of Social Services expressed his regret, albeit in limited fashion.

And Northumbria Police announced that they were reopening their inquiry into abuse at Witherwack and other homes in Sunderland. The man appointed to lead it was David Wilson, now a Detective Chief Superintendent.

Now, finally, the truth has begun to emerge. And from his place on the sidelines, Colin Smart is still watching in silence as the cover-up finally cracks.

## Whistleblowers who stood up and paid with their jobs



Taff Vale... the Cardiff home where Karen McKaye demanded complaints be investigated — and lost her job

In homes across the country workers who listened to children's complaints have been ignored. But in some cases their doggedness forced official action

COVER-UP has become part of the story of child abuse, particularly in the children's homes which were swept by a wave of rape and assault during the last three decades. Over and over again, somewhere in the midst of this wave, a lonely figure would appear, yelling for help, only to be ignored or submerged by the powers that should have reached out a hand.

In North Wales, it was Alison Taylor, the manager of a children's home, who spent five years banging on the door of her employers at Gwynedd Council, the police, the Welsh Office, the Department of Health, and the Social Services Inspectorate. All turned her away. Undaunted, she com-

piled a dossier of 75 separate allegations, won the backing of two local councillors and finally secured the conviction of four men for an orgy of abuse.

As a result, the Government finally ordered the vast public inquiry which has now heard nearly 300 former residents of homes make detailed complaints of physical and sexual assault against 148 adults.

By that time, however, Alison Taylor had been suspended and sacked. In South Wales, several years later, it was Karen McKaye who was thrown out of her job after demanding that children's complaints be investigated. Her refusal to be silenced finally provoked a major police inquiry into events at the Taff Vale children's

home in Cardiff. Now, 32 other homes in the area are also being investigated. Three men are awaiting trial over alleged incidents at Taff Vale.

In relation to the other homes, in April Robert Starr was jailed for 15 years for indecent assaults, and three others have been arrested.

In Warrington, Elaine Bowerman spent a decade trying to persuade her union, Nalco, her employers, Lancashire County Council, and the police to do something about the indecent assaults and violence which she said were being inflicted on children with learning difficulties at Massey Hall School where she worked.

She complained, for example, of the occasion when she had seen brown fluff blowing across the lawn and discovered that it was a boy's hair which had just been pulled from his head by a senior member of staff. Eventually, she went to the parents of some of the children to warn them

— and was sacked for gross misconduct.

In June 1997 Robert Boyle, aged 59, was charged with indecent assault on pupils at the school between 1982 and 1995. He was said to have handled boys' genitals in the showers. He claimed he was examining them for medical reasons. In April, he was acquitted by a jury at Warrington Crown Court.

However, the jury convicted him of lying about his past in order to get his job. When the judge sentenced him for this offence, the Crown disclosed for the first time that in 1977, Boyle had been convicted of six assaults on young boys. He had caught them stealing, the court was told, and given them a choice of being punished by the police or by himself. He had then beaten their bare backsides with a gym shoe or a baton. He had also fondled their genitals, claiming that this was for medical reasons. He had concealed this throughout his time at Massey Hall.

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## 6 BRITAIN

Case could transform reporting on politicians

Former Irish PM  
renews libel battle

Stuart Miller

**A**LBERT Reynolds, the former Irish prime minister, yesterday renewed his long-running legal battle with the Sunday Times in a case which could transform the ability of the British media to cover the activities of politicians.

Mr Reynolds went to the Court of Appeal after a 1996 High Court verdict left him facing huge legal bills even though the jury found he had been libelled by a story published in 1994 in the wake of the collapse of his Fianna Fail-Labour coalition government.

Under the headline, Good-bye Gombeen man: Why a fib too far proved fatal, the Sunday Times accused Mr Reynolds of misleading the Dail and lying to his Labour colleagues.

Although the jury found he had been libelled, it ruled that he was not entitled to damages because the paper had not acted maliciously. It had simply repeated allegations made in the Irish parliament.

As the paper had already paid £5,000 into court to settle the dispute, Mr Reynolds was ordered to pay his own costs up until the time the payment

was made, and the costs of the Sunday Times after that date.

Mr Reynolds claims that the High Court judge, Mr Justice French, who upped the jury's "zero damages" award to £1, was "confusing and unstructured" in his summing up to the jury.

But the Sunday Times is cross-appealing, claiming the article was in the public interest and published in good faith and should therefore be protected by the rule of qualified privilege.

Lord Lester QC, for the paper, told the court yesterday that the case highlighted the need for a reinterpretation of British libel laws to protect newspapers and broadcasters who criticised politicians or other public officials — even in cases such as this where the stories proved erroneous.

"The media needs to be able to err, to make mistakes, in the interests of free speech, even though it may have the effect of damaging, even severely damaging, a public official's reputation."

The fact that the story did not involve a British politician was irrelevant, Lord Lester said. The reasons for the withdrawal of the Labour party from the Irish coalition government, leading to its collapse and the resignation of

Mr Reynolds as taoiseach and leader of Fianna Fail, "were of very considerable significance and interest in the United Kingdom" because of the critical stage of the Northern Ireland peace process.

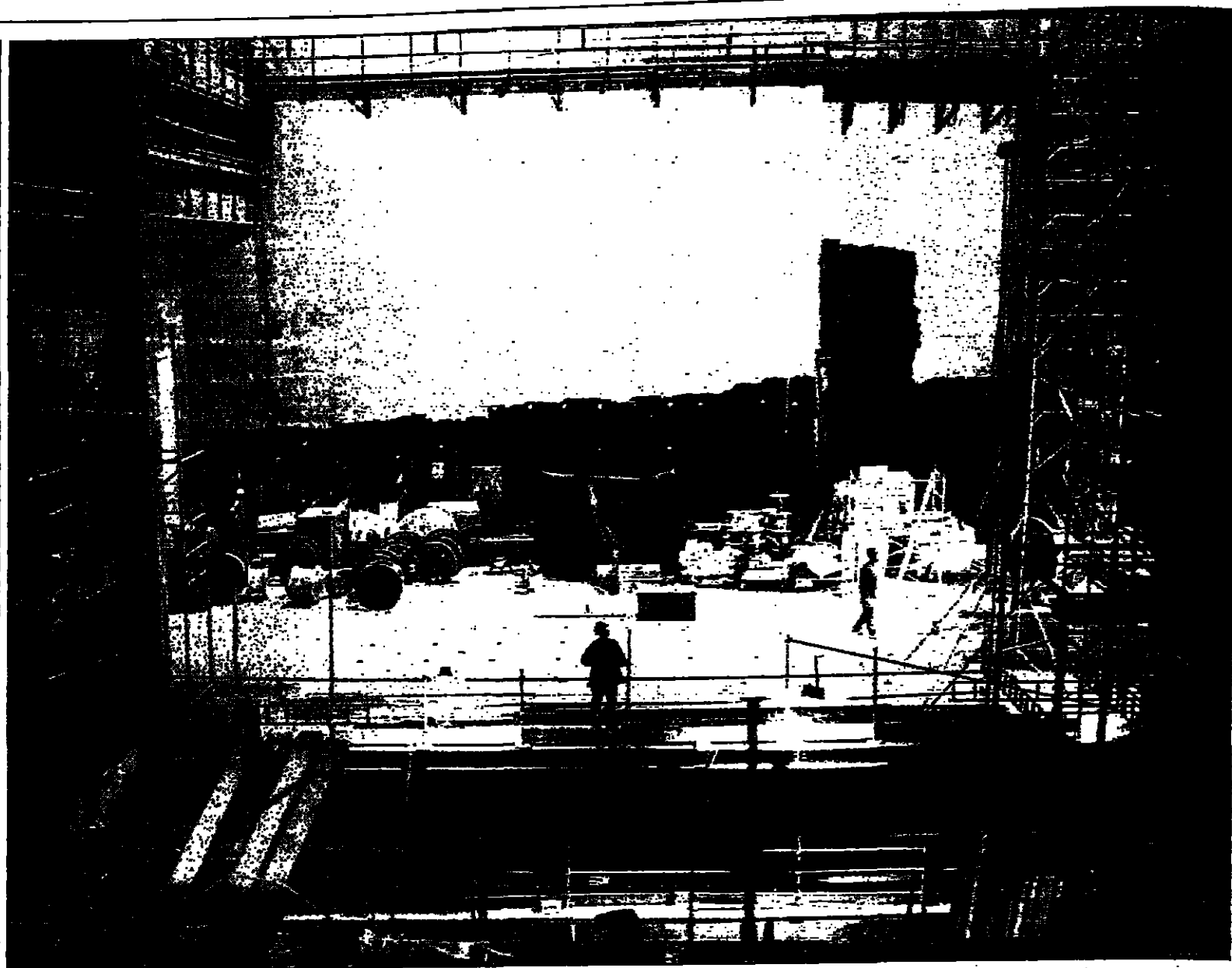
He urged the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, Lord Justice Hirst and Lord Justice Robert Walker to extend the existing law of qualified privilege to give the right to free expression of political discussion in the media priority over the protection of politicians' reputations.

The protection should not cover stories about the personal lives of politicians or senior public officials, nor should it be expanded to cover a wider definition of public figures, such as pop stars or sports celebrities.

He accepted that an extension of the qualified privilege would prevent public officials from challenging inaccurate stories about their public lives unless they could prove they were published out of malice or recklessness.

But he added: "Politicians, unlike ordinary people, also have the possibility of putting their case across in the media themselves. They also have the Press Complaints Commission so they are not completely without remedies."

The case continues today.



Workmen began the final stage yesterday of a two-year, £48 million refurbishment of Sadler's Wells, home of the Royal Ballet, in Islington, north London, which is expected to reopen in October with a programme including performances by the Rambert Dance Company. PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

## Padre cleared of sex charge



Richard Landall, who broke down in tears after being cleared of indecent assault, and (left) Shelly Brazier, who had earlier withdrawn allegations of harassment against him. PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT MONTGOMERY

## News in brief

Vinnie Jones found  
guilty of assault

FOOTBALLER Vinnie Jones was yesterday found guilty of assault causing actual bodily harm and criminal damage after a late night attack on neighbour Timothy Gear, aged 27, last November. The 33-year-old Queens Park Rangers and Wales star, of Redbourn, Hertfordshire, had denied punching, kicking and biting Mr Gear at his mobile home following a row over a stifle. Magistrates at St Albans, Herts, adjourned sentencing for reports until July 2. Jones, who is on bail, left court without commenting, accompanied by his wife, Tanya, and agent, Nick Davies. Mr Gear's mother, Gillian, said the family did not wish to discuss the case until after sentencing.

## Smoking 'worse than cocaine'

MOTHERS who smoke cause more death and damage to unborn babies and young children than those who take cocaine, according to an American scientist.

Theodore Slotkin, a pharmacologist from America's Duke University in North Carolina, criticised the media and medical establishment for failing to wake up to the evidence of serious harm caused by maternal smoking. Writing in the Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, he said smoking by a quarter of all pregnant women probably produced far more damage than the "timed and episodic" use of cocaine.

Animal studies had shown that nicotine inflicted serious damage on the foetus even at levels too low to cause low birth weight. Illicit drugs accounted for only a handful of deaths in the United States each year, he said, but tobacco killed 400,000.

## Lawrence suspects in aid plea

FOUR of the five men facing questions about the racist killing of Stephen Lawrence have been refused legal aid to challenge summonses to attend the public inquiry into the murder on Monday. Gary Dobson, aged 22, has lodged an appeal, which will be heard on Monday. His solicitor, Michael Holmes, said he wanted to go to the High Court to have the summons annulled to prevent his client being put "on trial". Dobson, Neil Acourt, aged 22, and Luke Knight, 20, were acquitted of the murder at the Old Bailey in 1998. Charges against Jamie Acourt and David Norris, both 21, never came to court. The Legal Aid Board does not make public its reasons for refusing aid, but applications have to satisfy a means test and test on the merits of the case. — David Pallister

## 'Jury' attacks genetic food

SUSPICION over the introduction of genetically modified foods was expressed yesterday by a "citizens' jury", which demanded segregation from unmodified foods and clear labelling. Twelve people, selected randomly from a council ward whose political complexion mirrored last year's general election results, spent 30 hours at a pub in Brighton questioning witnesses from the food industry in an experiment sponsored by the Consumers' Association, the Genetics Forum and Sainsbury's. They condemned "unnecessary reliance" on artificial fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides and called for the Common Agriculture Policy to give more aid to organic farmers. They accused food and chemical companies of acting in a "covert and secretive manner" over genetic modification and taking advantage of weak controls by the European Union and Britain. They called for a big public education programme over GM organisms. — James Meikle



Jamie Wilson

**T**HE first army chaplain to appear at a court martial was cleared yesterday of indecently assaulting a soldier's wife.

Captain Richard Landall, aged 41, broke down in tears after being returned his belt and cap and marching stiffly out of the courtroom at the end of the 10 day hearing.

A panel of five senior officers took just under two hours to reach its verdict at the court martial in Aldershot, Hampshire.

The alleged victim, a woman aged 24 who cannot be named, for legal reasons, had claimed Capt Landall groped her breast at a party, put his hand down her trousers, rubbed his groin against her and forcibly kissed her on the

lips. After his acquittal the chaplain said: "I thank God justice has been done. I have prayed the truth would come out. Just why these accusations were made I will never know. This has been an impossibly difficult time not only for myself but also for my children, my family and my friends."

On Monday the military court heard that the woman had negotiated to sell her story to the News of the World for up to £15,000 since giving evidence.

After being recalled to the court from Germany she at first denied any sum of money had been agreed, but later admitted signing a contract with the newspaper after she and her husband were taken to a hotel by two reporters.

A friend of the woman told the hearing that she had

heard the couple discuss selling the story to the press before the court martial began.

Capt Landall, based at the 2nd Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers base in Celle, Germany, at the time of the alleged offences in November last year, had told the hearing: "My job is the most important thing in my life and I have been stopped from doing it for six months. It's like cutting the oxygen off."

He admitted he was flirtatious with soldier's wives, but added: "I'm a flirt, not a pervert."

His wife Susan, aged 41, also gave an interview to the Sunday Mirror published during the trial which portrayed him as an overbearing, sexually demanding bully.

Brigadier David Montgomery, Capt Landall's commanding officer, had told the hearing: "If the allegations against

Padre Landall are true, I am a worse judge of men than I ever thought possible."

Throughout the case Alison Barker, defending, claimed the woman was lying because she was an "attention seeker", saying her marriage had been disintegrating, her child had been on an at risk register and the couple had money problems at the time they made the allegations.

The case against Capt Landall began to unravel last week when he was cleared of harassing Fusilier Sean Brazier and his wife Shelly, aged 27, after the soldier told an officer Capt Landall was a "lovely man" and had "never harassed me and my wife".

Yesterday an army spokesman said Capt Landall would be free to continue his army career. "He will go back to work and any future posting will have to be determined."

Khashoggi 'wrote  
dud cheques'

Jamie Wilson

**T**HE international arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi wrote worthless cheques for more than £3.2 million at the Ritz Hotel casino in Piccadilly, London, during a four day gambling spree, the High Court was told yesterday.

Mr Khashoggi is reputed to have earned much of his fortune by acting as a middleman in the sale of arms to Arab oil states. He is being sued for more than £8 million by the casino — the original debt and £5 million in interest.

The Saudi businessman, who was not in court yesterday, insists the debt is legally unenforceable because he had an arrangement with the casino's management which allowed him to continue gambling illegally on credit.

Nicholas Merriman QC, for the Ritz, said his defence was nonsense.

He told Mr Justice Roulger that the arms dealer gambled a total of £10.1 million between the end of January and April 10, 1986. "His gambling was initially successful and he won," Mr Merriman said.

"It was only in the later stages that he lost."

There was no dispute that Mr Khashoggi signed 16 cheques for £200,000 each, drawn on an account with the Swiss Banking Corporation of Geneva on three days at the end of March and on April 10. The cheques were refused on presentation because of insufficient funds.

Asked by the judge why the case had taken so long to come to court, Mr Merriman said that between 1986 and 1990 Mr Khashoggi made repeated promises to pay, but explained that he was having financial difficulties.

When finally asked to turn his attention to the dishonoured cheques he failed to do so and legal proceedings were launched.

Mr Khashoggi's defence was that he had an understanding with unnamed casino managers that his cheques would not be met on presentation because he was awaiting funds due to him.

The cheques were therefore a "stunt" and non-negotiable because he was being allowed to gamble unlawfully on credit.

The case continues today.

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Gucci's kill  
at large, co

key clamps

صوتنا من الراحل





Orazio Cicala stands in the defendants' cage in the Milan court yesterday, when he accused Patrizia Reggiani Gucci, below with her lawyer during the hearing, of paying him \$50,000 to have her former husband, the fashion magnate Maurizio Gucci, murdered

## Gucci's killer still at large, court told

Philip Willian in Rome

**T**HE former wife of the murdered fashion magnate Maurizio Gucci made her first appearance in the Milan assize court yesterday to hear the alleged driver of the killer's getaway car admit his responsibility and accuse her of having commissioned the killing.

But in an unexpected twist to the trial, which began three weeks ago, Orazio Cicala, aged 59, said the suspect next to him in the defendants' cage, Benedetto Ceraulo, aged 38, was not the killer.

"The crime was committed by a petty criminal whom I met when, because of my

money problems, I began dealing in drugs," he said. "The real killer is free, but I cannot name him because I have a family and children."

His 20-minute statement reinforced the prosecution case against Patrizia Reggiani Gucci.

Mr Cicala said he had met Gucci's estranged wife twice to discuss the killing, and had been paid about \$50,000.

Mrs Reggiani, aged 50, sat at the back of the court, flanked by prison guards and looking worn and ill after 16 months in Milan's bleak San Vittore prison. Her persistent coughing prompted Judge Renato Samè Ludovici to call a doctor for her.

The prosecution says she became consumed with ha-

tred for her ex-husband after an acrimonious divorce and paid for his murder to prevent him from marrying another woman.

Gucci, the last member of the Florentine fashion dynasty to head the family business, was shot dead on the morning of March 27 1995 as he arrived for work at his Milan office.

Mr Cicala said he had been contacted to arrange the murder by a Milan hotel porter, Ivano Savioni, and Pina Auremma, a Neapolitan clairvoyant and friend of Mrs Reggiani. He agreed to take money from them because he had got into debt buying a restaurant.

"I was under pressure from loan sharks and I thought this was manna from heaven." "One evening I received a call from Auremma: 'Listen, the package has arrived.' The next day we went to Milan, me and the petty criminal, in my car."



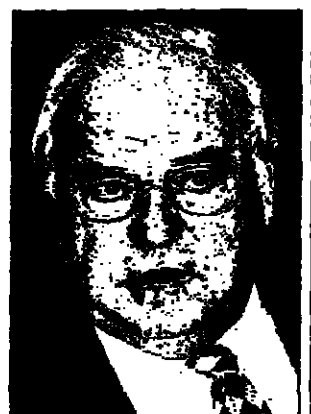
Mrs Reggiani's lawyers, Gaetano Pecorella and Giovanni Maria Dedola, dismissed the testimony as totally implausible.

They admit she had an obsessive hatred of her ex-husband but insist the murder was organised without her knowledge in order to blackmail her.

They insist that she was not fully responsible for her actions after undergoing a brain operation in 1992 and is in such poor health that she should not be kept in prison.

## Trailing Kohl aims below the belt in dirty campaign

**Ian Traynor in Bonn says no tactic seems too low for the German chancellor (right) as he sets out to win September's election**



**H**ELMUT KOHL'S final thing is turning dirty. About eight points adrift in the opinion polls, with four months to go till Germany's general election, the chancellor is baring his teeth, clearly relishing what is shaping into a robust and ruthless campaign.

Win or lose, it is the last campaign for the 68-year-old. After 16 years as chancellor and 26 in charge of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the country's natural party of government, Mr Kohl has often appeared tired and irritable in recent weeks, outshone by the freshness of his formidable challenger, Gerhard Schröder of the Social Democrats.

Suddenly, however, things are changing. Mr Kohl enjoyed a creditable party conference a fortnight ago. He swapped his role of spin doctor and strategist, bringing in several dirty-trick maestros and sacking or sidelining their lacklustre predecessors. After months of bickering in his camp, he has shown a new appetite for what he sees as his toughest election battle.

The evidence suggests Mr Kohl will lose his bid for a fifth term. Record unemployment is his biggest problem. He has only platitudes to offer the dole queues.

Germans prefer Mr Schröder by a margin of two-to-one. But September 27 is not a beauty contest. The voters may be charmed by Mr Schröder, but they do not know him. They may not like Mr Kohl but they respect and seem to trust him. And many Germans will be breaking the habit of a lifetime if they vote for Mr Schröder.

German voters, at least four-fifths of whom are in former West Germany, are profoundly conservative. Not once in postwar Germany have they thrown out a sitting chancellor at a general election.

Mr Kohl is taking no chances, campaigning to terrify voters into sticking with the old buffer they know, if not love. The Kohl team, after initially saying it would fight on policy, issues and change, has abruptly abandoned the high ground and is aiming its punches low.

It is a curiously backward-looking strategy, focusing on the red menace as if the cold war had never been won.

"Germany watch out," warned the CDU posters this week, depicting a pair of red hands gripped in an iron handshake. The Socialist red hands represent the Social Democrats and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the former communists of what was East Germany.

The message is that if Mr Kohl loses, reunified Germany will become an East German-style communist state, with Mr Schröder the telegraphic Trojan horse carrying the extremists to power.

A Schröder win would signal the birth of a new German "leftwing republic" under a 1950s Soviet-style "Popular Front" government, according to the new Kohl propaganda.

It is a gross calumny on the Social Democrats. They were forcibly merged with the communists and then banned in East Germany on Moscow's orders in 1949, while the CDU in the east became a lapdog of the communist regime.

The pretext for this latest poster is the Social Democrats' formation of a minority government in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt with the tacit support of the PDS. The PDS usually attracts 20 per cent of the east German vote and has mayors and councillors in scores of east German towns and villages, where the local CDU also co-operates with it.

Otto Hauser, Mr Kohl's new spin doctor, a mere week in office but already more aggressive than his predecessor, insists there is little to choose between the PDS and Hitler's Nazi party.

Even if many Germans, particularly in the west, find the former communists distasteful, the comparisons are offensive to many people. The demonising of the former communists also leaves Mr Kohl open to charges of hypocrisy.

Milan Kucan, the president of Slovenia, was in Bonn for friendly talks with Mr Kohl last week, while Boris Yeltsin, the Russian president and Mr Kohl's "dear friend", visits next week.

Moreover, the outgoing Hungarian prime minister, Gyula Horn, is a German national hero. And President Alexander Kwasniewski of Poland is a welcome guest in Bonn. All got where they are today as communists. Mr Kohl evidently gets along with former communists provided they are not German.

Mr Kohl and his allies are also not shy of playing the anti-foreigner card to ward off a rightward drift to the neo-Nazis. Mr Kohl's stump speech now includes a ritual threat to deport any of the 8 million immigrants who may abuse German hospitality.

If foreigners come here, they enjoy the rights of the guest," Mr Kohl told a regional CDU congress. "But they have to behave like the kind of guests you would invite into your home on a Sunday. If they come into the home, wreck the place, beat up the housewife and stamp on the dog, then they will just have to get out of Germany."

And while shedding crocodile tears over a "highly personalised" contest, the CDU is seeking a new public image. It is perhaps a sign of desperation that he has so abruptly revamped his campaign team and taken to punching below the belt. But the opinion polls are narrowing, and Mr Kohl has won more elections than any other German politician.

There are 260,000 fishermen in the EU. They catch 7 million tons a year, in fourth place behind China (13 million tons), Japan (9.3 million tons) and the former Soviet Union countries (9.2 million tons).

Perhaps the saddest aspect of the news from the Barents Sea is the doubt it casts on one of the most hopeful developments in the sad saga of man's mismanagement of the marine harvest.

Two years ago, the WWF and the food giant Unilever jointly set up the Marine Stewardship Council, with a pledge by Unilever only to use fish from sustainable stocks.

That far-sighted agreement depends entirely on the inexact science of estimating fish stocks. The forthcoming announcement by ICES that its earlier estimates of Barents Sea stocks were wrong undermines the entire strategy.

## Turkey clamps down on student protests

Chris Morris in Ankara

**T**URKISH universities have introduced tough regulations which threaten students with expulsion if they take part in demonstrations on or off campus.

The new rules, which university principals want applied throughout the country, seem aimed primarily at students who identify themselves as Islamists. Turkey's secular elite, led by the military, has sought to clamp down on what it sees as a

rise in Islamist activities. The rules will increase the pressure on hundreds of medical students in Istanbul, who have staged demonstrations for months to protest against a ban on Islamic-style headscarves on campus.

Last week the students staged a photographic exhibition documenting their protests. "There are no limitations on thought and attire in a democratic country," they said. "We will not be silent until this prohibition ends."

But the Higher Education Council, which represents

university principals, intends to enforce Turkey's secular dress codes strictly. From the beginning of the next academic year, women students will have to present photographs taken without headscarves to register at any university. Male students will have to submit photographs without beards, which are seen as a sign of Muslim piety, and remain clean-shaven throughout the year.

Islamist students say their protests will intensify, but it is now clear that the authorities intend to act quickly. If

both the dress code and the new prohibition against demonstrations are strictly enforced, thousands of students could face expulsion.

As the rules appear to target Islamists, many intellectuals may prefer to remain silent. But there has already been criticism. "The authorities are taking away the right of students to express themselves," said Gulay Gokturk, a columnist in the newspaper 'Yeni Yuzil'. "Democracy will once again be sacrificed to political hostilities."

The universities are often

the scene of battles between extremists. Last month a student was killed in the north-western town of Bolu, allegedly by far-right nationalists known as Grey Wolves. On Monday a leftwing student was stabbed in Istanbul.

The authorities argue that students are provoked by outsiders. "The tolerant atmosphere on campuses is being exploited for political ends," said Kemal Guruz, president of the Higher Education Council. "The aim of the new rules is not to punish students, but to win them over."



An injured Afghan girl is comforted by her father while being evacuated by helicopter from her village in the remote north-east of Afghanistan yesterday after an earthquake which measured 7.1 on the Richter scale. As many as 5,000 people may have died, and 40 villages been destroyed, in the quake and the landslides it triggered, according to unconfirmed estimates by relief agencies. In February another severe quake in the same area killed between 1,200 and 4,000 people

## Cod swims to oblivion as the EU flounders

Martin Walker in Brussels

**L**AST orders are looming in fish and chip shops as the one remaining cod fishery outside the Pacific, the Barents Sea off Norway, is plunged into crisis.

Unless fishing is banned immediately in the area, the main spawning ground for Arctic cod, scientists warn in a report to be published soon that stocks could fall below "the safe biological minimum" next year.

With the Atlantic cod grounds on the Grand Banks off Canada and the United States closed after years of over-fishing, and the North Sea cod fishery going the same way, Britain's favourite fish is swimming into extinction.

"Nobody can say they were not warned. Two years ago, cod and haddock were both put on the World Conservation Union's red list for endangered species," said Mike Sutton, who runs the global fisheries campaign for the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF).

When North Sea stocks began falling, the industry turned to the Grand Banks. And when that closed, with the loss of 40,000 jobs, they increased their fishing in the Barents Sea, with predictable results. Now there is nowhere left to turn, except to the Pacific cod, which is a different species. They'll probably fish that out next."

The Barents Sea report, by the International Council for Exploration of the Sea, has provoked a political row. Based in Copenhagen, ICES

produces surveys of the world's fisheries. But advance word of this report, claiming the cod population of the Barents Sea has been over-estimated, has caused outrage in Norway. Fishermen claim cuts in quotas would cost them \$200 million.

After a catastrophic fall in yields in the 1980s, which forced authorities to slash the catch from 800,000 tons a year to 170,000 tons, the Barents Sea is supposed to be one of the best-controlled fisheries.

This latest crisis comes as European Union ministers scramble to resolve the last one, with a plan to require all EU fishing vessels to fit transponders so they can be tracked by satellite.

The campaign to ban drift nets on the high seas should be won next week, when EU fisheries ministers meet in Brussels.

But the drift nets row

reveals the weakness of EU fishing rules. The EU is still ignoring United Nations resolutions to ban nets longer than 1.5 miles. And Italian fishermen are still lobbying hard against an EU ban on the 10-mile-long nets they use to catch swordfish and tuna, but which devastate the Mediterranean dolphins.

"The EU still remains one of the really big problems," Mr Sutton said. "When the Commission proposes something sensible, it gets watered down or blocked in the Council, where ministers come under political pressure from their fishermen."

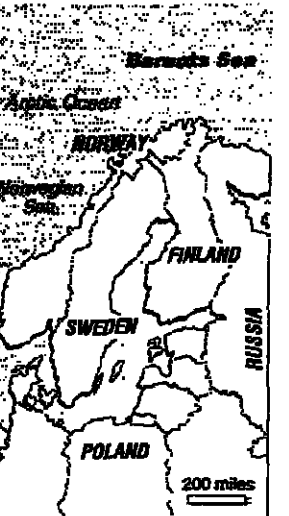
The battle is under way to rewrite the EU's Common Fisheries Policy, which is to be renegotiated in four years' time — "if there are any fish left by then," the WWF notes dryly. The issue is whether the political will can be mustered to stop the EU scheme

under which it "buys" fishing rights from third countries. The EU spends £160 million a year, mainly paying African countries to let Spanish vessels scoop up their fish.

This EU subsidy is part of the bizarre economics of global fishing, for which governments pump in an annual £15 billion in subsidies for a catch worth \$55 billion.

All the world's fisheries are in trouble after the global catch quadrupled in the 40 years after 1950.

The answer has been to cut the fleet. But the EU target to reduce the fleet by 40 per cent in six years has been scrapped. The EU now has the worst of all worlds — failing to manage its threatened stocks while inflicting its fishermen.



Cod face extinction in one of the last remaining fisheries





Zolamérica Narváez (inset), stepdaughter of former Sandinista president Daniel Ortega (centre), has inspired her countrywomen to cry halt to men riding roughshod over their lives

## Republicans scent blood over 'cash links to Beijing'

**Martin Kettle** in Washington reports on attempts to embarrass the president as he prepares for his historic visit

**R**EPUBLICAN congressional leaders agreed yesterday to hold a series of urgent, high-profile inquiries into the White House's financial connections with China before Bill Clinton goes to Beijing later this month, the first visit by a United States president since the Tiananmen Square massacre nine years ago.

**Some Republicans even claim that the Loral deal was directly responsible for goading India, and then Pakistan, into beginning their recent nuclear test programmes**

of satellite technology know-how to China.

Today is the formal deadline for Mr Clinton to ask Congress to renew China's "most-favoured nation" trading status. Mr Lott and his Republican colleagues have supported the measure in the past, but they are considering opposing it this time.

"The president fully intends to make a strong case on why we should continue normal trade relations with China," the White House spokesman, Mike McCurry, said on Monday.

Mr Lott said Mr Clinton's request would be "reviewed carefully".

In the annual battle, the president will argue that his policy of engagement with China has produced tangible benefits, including its agreement to end nuclear exports to Iran, assistance in the continuing Asian financial crisis, the release of prominent civil rights dissidents and the opening up of investment opportunities for US companies.

He will say he needs to

visit Beijing to maintain the momentum.

Although Congress is expected to renew China's most-favoured status, there is no mistaking the markedly anti-China mood on Capitol Hill of the past few weeks, especially in the wake of the revelation that the White House gave the Loral space technology company — whose chairman Bernard Schwartz is one of the Democratic Party's biggest donors — a satellite export licence at the same time as the justice department was investigating Loral for unauthorised transfers of missile technology.

What makes the Loral story particularly controversial is not Mr Schwartz's \$1 million (\$250,000) donations to the Democratic National Committee, but the fact that Mr Clinton and his advisers ignored the justice department and a Pentagon warning by issuing the export licence in February. The licence allowed Loral to launch a satellite from a Chinese rocket.

Anti-China and anti-Clinton Republicans have seized on the controversy with enthusiasm, believing that it provides them with a more effective weapon against the Democrats in a mid-term election year than allegations about Mr Clinton's sex life or his arcane bank dealings long ago in Arkansas.

The Republican senator Richard Shelby said the Loral deal had generated "the most serious allegations that I've heard on any administration in the last eight, 10, 12 years".

Some Democrats share that view. "It's about foreign policy allegedly being affected by political contribution," said the Texas Democratic congressman Chet Edwards. "If that's true, it's political dynamite."

Mr Clinton's critics also want a fresh investigation of the Democratic Party fund-raising. Johnnie Chung, Hsiao told federal investigators that he funnelled nearly \$100,000 from a Chinese military officer, Liu Chao-ying, into Democratic Party accounts during the 1996 presidential election.

Foreign lobbying in US domestic party politics has a long pedigree, not least among the pro-Israel lobby. The White House has tried to brush off the criticisms concerning Mr Chung by saying such a scheme would be "amazing", and it has insisted the Loral deal was authorised by "routine" procedures.

Last week Mr McCurry said: "This administration has pursued the exact same policy pursued by the Bush administration."

But what excites the Republicans is their view that in the Loral deal the president of the United States personally made sure that a company owned by one of his party's biggest donors was able to supply the world's second most powerful country with the technology to blind US spy satellites and help launch missile attacks on the US.

Some Republicans even claim that the Loral deal was directly responsible for goading India, and then Pakistan, into beginning their recent nuclear test programmes.



Hillary Clinton adorns the cover of a Chinese women's magazine on sale in Beijing, a sign of growing interest in the First Lady and President Clinton as he prepares to visit China

## New Chinese critics shine light on dark side of politics

The Tiananmen Square massacre is still off-limits, but writers are winning readers by daring to challenge party diehards. **John Gittings** reports

**A** NEW debate now sweeping China about reform has raised issues barely mentioned in public since the upheaval of 1989.

The events which led to the Beijing massacre exactly nine years ago still cannot be referred to directly. But newly published books and articles are criticising the Maoist diehards in the Communist Party who backed the suppression of the students.

More liberal-minded party leaders have encouraged a new generation of intellectuals to take a hard look at the darker side of China's economic and social revolution. One of the criticisms is that 70 per cent of state assets have been "siphoned off into private pockets".

The new critics also warn that the "leftwing" forces in the party are preparing for another battle. This time, they say, it will be fought over the "reform of political structures", which the diehards fear could lead to more democracy.

Top of booklists is *Crossing Swords*, written by two journalists on the official People's Daily newspaper. It has already sold 300,000 copies and can be found on railway bookstalls and in small-town bookshops all over the country.

One of the authors, Ma

Licheng, recently had a well-publicised meeting with the former deputy prime minister Wan Li, who congratulated him for exposing the "bad ideas" of the leftwingers.

Nine years ago the students in Tiananmen Square had high hopes that Mr Wan would support them when he returned from abroad, but he was prevented by the hardliners from coming back to Beijing.

*Crossing Swords* warns that recent documents issued by the "left" have the same dogmatic ring as Maoist diatribes during the Cultural Revolution 30 years ago. The book avoids describing what happened in 1989, only referring elliptically to "various reasons" which led to a harsher political climate in the early 1990s.

But it denounces the hardliners for taking advantage of the crackdown to call for a renewal of "class struggle" and to oppose Deng Xiaoping's efforts to revive the faltering economic reforms.

Another bestseller, *The Trap of Modernisation* by He Qinglian, a young economist, provides a detailed account of the climate of corruption and the widening gap between rich and poor. She lists 12 types of illegal operation in the

"black economy", ranging from drugs and prostitution to currency fraud, insider trading and illegal sale of planning permits. The sex and pornography business is "one of the main areas of black income", she says.

Ms He also cites statistics showing that no customs duty has been paid on up to four of every five cars imported from Japan.

The popularity of these books reflects a new spirit of debate in a previously numb intellectual climate, but it does not yet amount — as some optimists have suggested — to a "springtime" of liberal thought in China.

The authors avoid delicate topics such as the treatment of dissidents and the kind of democratic change needed. This is not just because of political inhibitions: they also strongly believe that the only secure route towards liberalisation is through continued economic reform.

They back the supreme party leader, Jiang Zemin, and hope to stiffen his resolve by presenting a strong case for pushing ahead.

But in describing the struggle between the dogmatic "left" and the enlightened supporters of reform, they throw impor-



Bestseller *Crossing Swords* warns that the left sounds as dogmatic now as it did in the Cultural Revolution

tant light on the darkest episodes of recent history, and suggest the struggle is still continuing.

*Crossing Swords* was rejected by a dozen publishers, who feared it might "cause difficulties" for them, before it was accepted in a new popular series called *China's Problems*.

The title appears, in the current fashion, in both English and Chinese.

The book has been criticised for undermining the party's "basic line" at seminars organised by academic journals edited by orthodox party intellectuals.

Corruption remains the most compelling subject. Many books offer, with clear political overtones, potted histories of the 50 worst cases since Mao's revolution of 1949.

## Revolution flares again in Nicaragua. This time women are challenging the old order of male impunity

Ed Vallentyne in Managua

**T**HE Nicaraguan political elite, left and right, closed ranks yesterday behind the Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega as his immunity from prosecution on charges of sexually abusing her as a child, and raping her.

Even former enemies in the contra movement, which fought an insurrection against him, intend to defend Mr Ortega against his adopted stepdaughter Zolamérica Narváez. The episode is blowing apart the Ortega dynasty, once an inspiration to the political left worldwide, and provoking a quiet revolution in Nicaragua and its famously effervescent political underground.

Ms Narváez's accusations are prompting women to make a stand against the power of men in politics and the home, in a country where one in two women has suffered sexual or domestic violence.

Volleeta Deljaudo of the Women's Network Against Violence said: "This is our opportunity to scale the 'second wall' after the Sandinista rebellion — the issue no one can escape from. This is the moment at which we either act or else remain frozen forever, wearing a face without dignity. It's one thing to talk about these things; now something has to be done."

Ms Narváez's supporters say politicians are protecting what her close friend Angela Savallios called "not just Ortega's parliamentary immunity, but the moral immunity of men in this society, and the culture of machismo".

Ms Narváez filed charges last week accusing Mr Ortega of sexual abuse from when she was 11 until 1982, "continuous" rape from 1982 to 1992, and sexual harassment thereafter.

She had intended to go to parliament on Monday to ask for Mr Ortega's immunity to be lifted, but changed her mind after a judge dismissed the charges on the technicality that they were filed in an open writ not a sealed one, on the wrong kind of paper. Friends say she intends to refile the charges and then go to parliament, probably this week.

Rightwing deputies are ready to block proceedings against their old enemy, Carlos Guerra of the Liberal Party, which includes many former contras, said the allegations were "emotional and extemporaneous". Eduardo Rizo of the Patriot Party, part of the ruling bloc, said they were "motivated" and Mr Ortega had "nothing to answer for".

The closing of ranks is transparently a political pact: Ms Narváez's attempt to lift Mr Ortega's immunity coincides with an unfolding parallel scandal, the "Narvoje" investigation into alleged use of President Arnaldo Alemán's private light plane for smuggling cocaine.

"It's a deal to protect Ortega from the sex scandal and the government from prosecution for narco-trafficking," said Henry Petrie, leader of the dissident Sandinista faction backing Ms Narváez, which was expelled from the party last week.

Cardinal Miguel Obando, Archbishop of Managua, has entered the fray, saying he did not expect Ms Narváez's accusations to reach trial or Mr Ortega's immunity to be lifted. "It's impossible for this to go that far because we're in Nicaragua, where if someone has power no one can touch it," he said. He urged deputies to "act according to their consciences".

Ms Narváez declines to give interviews but talks regularly to Ms Savallios, a former international spokeswoman for the Sandinista government, now a PR consultant.

She told her about a conversation with her mother, Rosario Murillo — last week Ms Murillo who has led the counter-attack on her husband's behalf, "told her own daughter she should tell the truth", Ms Savallios said. "Zolamérica

replied: 'Mother, there cannot be your truth and my truth. Mine is the only truth.'"

Ms Savallios, who has left the party, said: "This is what happens when men are threatened by a woman's charges. They come together to protect the machista culture, from whatever political side they're on."

She added: "In terms of women, this case is about realising that men will always stick together. In terms of an individual, it is about finding out whether you have a mother. This is a real drama that is happening."

Ms Murillo stepped up the counter-attack yesterday with an interview in the newspaper *Nuevo Diario*. She said her daughter was being "manipulated".

Michelle Natis, the director of the Women's Advice Centre to which Ms Narváez took her accusations, said: "It's very sad that Daniel Ortega, accused of a grave crime, does not respond to these serious accusations, leaving it to third parties to launch personal attacks and attempt to neutralise them."

In one of the scrappy battles on the western outskirts of Managua, Mr Ortega staged a special Mother's Day walk about on Sunday to show that he was still a man of the family.

This shanty town was once his natural home: women once allowed their way forward to kiss his hand, man to shake it. Now his jeep encountered an unquiet crowd, a nasty atmosphere and a

'Now, suddenly, many women are coming forward. They have given themselves permission to speak'

scuffle. His cronies barged through the crowd, a female television reporter was violently manhandled by a group of his supporters, and a woman shouted "violador" — rapist.

A few blocks away, opposite the imposing headquarters of the Sandinista Workers' Association, is the small house where the Women's Network Against Violence operates.

Ms Deljaudo said the only thorough study of violence against women in Nicaragua by the university in León in 1994-5, found that half of them had suffered sexual abuse or domestic violence, three-quarters of them at the hands of a relative.

"Now, suddenly, many women are coming forward, speaking out with Zolamérica about what has happened to them. They have given themselves permission to speak," she said.

"For instance, me. We were discussing this in my family last week, six of us, and it turned out three of us had suffered, including my mother. And I know another who was too frightened to admit it."

Her network has successfully lobbied for tougher laws against the abuse of women, including the admission of psychological evidence of trauma after physical scars have vanished.

She feels betrayed by the leftwing leadership and sees "a moment when women have to show their self-esteem, to vindicate Zolamérica and with her themselves."

The network plans to hold demonstrations, "out" abuses and flood deputies with letters. But she said: "Many women cannot believe this is true. Ortega is like a father figure to them, and just as they keep silent over their own fathers, they cannot accept Ortega's guilt."

"If you say you support Zolamérica you are taking a position in your life, in front of all your household, all your neighbours and your own history."



Marion Milner

## Journey to the centre of the mind

**W**E DON'T expect to know about the psychoanalyst's internal life: for the therapeutic encounter, the analysts turn themselves as far as possible into a blank sheet onto which the patient projects his or her fears, hopes, and fantasies. Uniquely, Marion Milner, the distinguished British psychoanalyst, who died aged 86, began her career with a remarkable piece of self-analysis, *A Life of One's Own*.

First published in 1934 by Chatto & Windus to enthusiastic reviews by Spender and Auden ("as exciting as a detective story"), it was reissued by Virago in the late 1980s together with its companion volume *An Experiment in Leisure*, stoking the enthusiasm of another generation. And although in the meantime Milner had become a major figure, she never lost the probing honesty and vivid directness which characterised her earliest work.

Milner was born in London and, at the age of 14, wanted to become a naturalist: she used to say that she switched later to human nature. After a degree in psychology and physiology at London University, she worked as an industrial psychologist and did research on "problem" pupils for the Girls' Public Day School Trust. Where others saw mental laziness or disobedience, Milner discovered the imposition of inappropriate adult standards. The result was a book, *The Human Problem in Schools* (1938).

By then, she was married to Dennis Milner, an inventor and writer with whom she had one son. Since 1926, Milner, motivated by a vague sense of dissatisfaction, had been keeping a diary, noting when she was happy and why, aiming to "find a standard of values that is truly one's own and not a borrowed mass-produced ideal". Her self-observation threw up traits which shocked her: a sense of dissatisfaction, dependence on other people's approval, the way that her contemplation of spiritual matters would be rudely interrupted by coveting a frock or by another woman's success. Delving deeper, she came upon a dark and violent side, all rage and fear of retribution.

But then she began to make contact with something she called "a still small voice" or her "inner fact": an alive and intuitive part, which seemed to express her real, deep needs beneath the noisy clamourings of her will and social norms. She realised that "I want a chance to play, to do things I choose just for the joy of doing, for no purpose of advancement." She started to appreciate that the more she crammed her life with activity and experience, the more she strove after happiness and contentment, the more she seemed to find them. Why had no one told her, she demanded, that the function of the will might be to stand back, to wait and not to push?

Letting go was not easily achieved: she noted frankly the difficulties of quieting the meddlesome mind and, as the business gave way, her fear of engulfment and annihilation. But the rewards were abundant. Relinquishing her will turned the simplest tasks meaningful, and the hardest simple. She was eloquent, for instance, about darning her stockings, what had been a boring chore, clumsily executed, became fluid and satisfying when she retrained her interfering brain and allowed her arm to do it.

She let her "automatic self" roam free through an "internal picture of mind". Developing a readiness to accept what came along, deploying the "wider, unfocused perception", she identified fleeting moments of delight—like the sight of a chicken busily crunching a blade of grass at a cafe in the Black Forest.

Milner turned her diary into *A Life of One's Own*, writing after her son's birth. It was published under the pseudonym of Joanna Field because she feared frightening the children. *A Life of One's Own* was a bestseller, and was followed by *An Experiment in Leisure*. By then Milner was in psychoanalysis herself, and soon began attending DW Winnicott's Saturday morning clinics for mothers and babies at Paddington Green Children's Hospital, west London. In 1940, after the publication of her first three books, she began to train as a psychoanalyst (attending training seminars in the Blitz and blackout).

Milner's membership paper for the British Psychoanalytical Society, about a suicidal symptom in a child of three, was supervised by Melanie Klein, and was read in the basement of 116 Gloucester Place on the day in 1943 that German V1 bombs began to attack London. By 1952, she was so respected by her peers that she was asked to write a paper in honour of Klein's 70th birthday for a special issue of the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. She had also become a colleague of Winnicott as well as (briefly) one of his patients; she was to take up and develop his ideas of "the holding environment" and the role of play. But around 1964 (the year her husband died) she stopped attending Klein's seminars because she could not accept Klein's theory of infant envy: Milner believed that the great envy exhibited by some of her own patients resulted from an infancy in which far too little allowance had been made for their primary omnipotence.

Milner's most original professional contribution was in her use of patients' drawings, and in her own theorising about art and creativity. It was during her first years of analysis, and before having any ideas about applying for training, that she found herself doing free association or doodle drawings. Beginning with scribbles, pictures with definite stories emerged, though she had no conscious awareness of what they were about, and

they produced images often startlingly different from what she had thought she was depicting. She was so surprised at discovering this capacity that in 1959—on the day that war was declared, and when she knew that her work in schools would be over because of the evacuation—she set about writing another book, making use of these stories.

On *Not Being Able to Paint* (1960) used the same free associating techniques that Milner had used in her earlier books but applied to drawing. The title had a personal resonance: Milner considered herself a "Sunday painter", and wanted to know what impeded her from being a better one. The book brought together psychological and aesthetic ideas: laws of perspective connected in her mind with separation, while the question of outline fascinatingly suggested issues about psychological boundaries. At the suggestion of Masud Khan a second edition was published in 1967 with an introduction by Anna Freud.

Milner's fifth book, *The Hands of the Living God* (1969), analysed the drawings of a patient with whom she had worked for many years. Like her earlier work, her books on art suggested that the imagination thrives when the artist is in a state of creative surrender and risks the void. "Loose consciousness", she counselled both artist and art-appreciator. "Descend with the painter into the dim tangled roots of things, and rise again from them in colours". In the 1987 collection of her papers, *The Surreal Mind and Technical Terms*, Milner concluded, on the subject of thinking and thought, "I think you".

Milner's writing style, never rhetorical or ostentatious, was remarkably free of jargon and technical terms. Her psychology professor in the early 1940s had said that the good psychologist used only an ordinary English dictionary, and Milner had taken his words to heart. She considered abstract psychological terms as essential tools for communicating with one's peer group, but she valued spontaneous emotional expression (as well as visual and material images) too much to use them.

Her work also made rich use of myth and poetry. She had a special affinity with Blake: the title of her travel book, *Eternity's Sunrise*, begun in 1958 and first published in 1967, was based on the Blake poem: "He who binds to himself a joy? Doth the winged life destroy? But he who kisses the joy as it flies? Lives in eternity's sunrise."

Milner particularly valued Blake for his understanding of the intuitive; he called this female and insisted that, unless it carried equal weight with the logical, psychic sterility would arise. Milner believed that our culture overvalued "male" qualities like doing and undervalued "female" ones like receptiveness and being. She was ahead of her time in learning to value the femininity of her mind.



Milner... a still small voice beneath the clamouring of her will

BRENDA FRINGS

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## Birthdays

Wasim Akram, cricketer, 32; Dr Ernest (Mac) Armstrong, secretary, BMA, 53; Philip Attenborough, publisher, 82; Sir Peter Brierley, chief executive, FT, 54; Tony Curtis, actor, 73; Prof Richard D'Aeth, educationist, 66; Jason Donovan, pop singer, 30; Sheila Faith, dental surgeon, 70; Dr Raoul Franklin, plasma physicist, 62; Sir Peter Fraser, show hostess, 85; Eddie McGready, SDLP MP, 55; Colin Meads, rugby player, 62; Michael Moore, Lib Dem MP, 38; Suzi Quatro, rock singer, 48; Alain Resnais, film director, 75; Hale Irwin, golfer, 53; Eddie McGready, SDLP MP, 55; Wilfred Thesiger, explorer, 88; Cardinal Thomas Winning, Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow, 73.

## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

ONE OF the pie charts that accompanied a report headed, Market competition oils the aid machine, Page 7, May 28, was based on incorrect data supplied to us. The chart showing where Christian Aid money goes should have accounted for it as follows: work in the field and education in the UK, 87 per cent; fundraising, 11 per cent; administration, 2 per cent.

ON PAGE 7 yesterday, we showed a picture of Leon Trotsky but mistakenly identified him as Tolstoy.

PAM EWING of *Dallas* (TV review, G2, Page 15, June 1) was never abducted by aliens. But Fallon of *The Cillies* was.

LAFITTE, as in Chateau Lafite, has one t, not two as it was spelt on Page 7 of our Saturday section, May 30 (P Morton Shand and Cyril Ray: *A Book of French Wines*, Penguin). It has been Lafite since the Bordeaux classification of 1855, or perhaps even before.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 269 9589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

## Lotti Huber

## Life is a cabaret, old chum

**L**OTTI HUBER, who has died aged 85, was a singer, dancer and actress, who survived a Nazi concentration camp and became a cult figure, talk-show hostess and gay icon when she was already past retirement age. Less than five feet tall, with massive false eyelashes, hair scraped back into a bun and earrings the size of pomgranates, she was one of Berlin's most exotic figures.

She won the hearts of young Germans with her upbeat message of tolerance and self-reliance, delivered with a coquettish lisp as she puffed on a cheroot. For her part, she thought her young fans were simply *bezaubert*, or enchanting. But Lotti Huber thought everything was *bezaubert*. In Berlin, her second husband, her friends, her own life.

Born Lotti Goldmann, she grew up in the northern port city of Kiel, where her father was a prosperous Jewish textile merchant. She studied expressive dance before moving to Berlin with her childhood sweetheart, Hilbert Lenken. Under Hitler's race laws, Lenken was "Aryan" and thus forbidden to have sexual relations with a Jewish woman. In 1937, a former classmate of Huber's denounced her to the police and she was sent to a concentration camp in Lichtenburg for a year. Her lover was shot.

Thanks to the intervention of an American Jewish organisation, Huber was allowed to emigrate to Palestine in 1938. She studied dance and mime in Haifa but soon discovered that there was little enthusiasm in the Middle East for expressive dance. She turned to exotic

dancing, mainly for the entertainment of British Army officers, and moved to Cairo, and then London, before opening a hotel in Cyprus with her first husband, a British officer whose name she never revealed.

When they divorced, Huber returned to London, where she met in 1959 the second great love of her life, another British officer, Colonel Norman Huber. The couple moved to Berlin and lived a quiet, happy life together until the colonel died in 1974, leaving his widow penniless. Huber supported herself

translating cheap novels and renting rooms to artists until she secured a tiny role in the film *Just a Gigolo*, which starred David Bowie and Marlene Dietrich. It was during the making of this film that she met Rosa von Praunheim, the gay film director who was to transform her life and make her a star. Huber was over 70 when she took part in her first star vehicle, a film called *Afterglow*, in which she sang and danced her way through her life story, ignoring most of von Praunheim's instructions as she went. Yet von Praun-

heim cast her in almost all his films in the 1980s and compared her to Dietrich and Edith Piaf. Berliners embraced her as their very own neighbourhood diva and her cabaret appearances drew large, loyal audiences.

Huber was especially popular among gays and she cheered her each year as she waved from the balcony of her Lehnstrasse apartment during the Christopher Street Day parade. "Now the creative years will begin," Huber declared on her 75th birthday. She wrote an autobiography which she comes to recognise as other talents and praising them. And successful writers are no exception. But Wolf was incredibly generous to other writers. Maybe he never felt threatened. Mind you, with a talent like his, who couldn't afford such magnanimity? When he ever reviewed my work, I was always expecting the worst. He was always surprised at his generosity. His sweetness was all the more sweet because of that gruff and direct manner. He came just slightly before

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## Appreciation: Wolf Mankowitz

**T**HE author and playwright Wolf Mankowitz (*Obituary*, May 23) was a complex man with a tough and formidable manner and a sharp, acerbic and incisive mind. When I first met him I was nervous; he seemed to tower above me and I felt I had to weigh my words.

There was a distinct lack of bluntness about him. If you wanted a real battle of words, or will, you would have come to the right place. He didn't seem to trust the world and had no illusions about the human race.

And yet, and yet. When you got closer to Wolf, you recognised a real sweetness within. Writers are only human and are not generally kind to other writers, especially when it comes to recognising other talents and praising them. And successful writers are no exception. But Wolf was incredibly generous to other writers. Maybe he never felt threatened. Mind you, with a talent like his, who couldn't afford such magnanimity? When he ever reviewed my work, I was always expecting the worst. He was always surprised at his generosity. His sweetness was all the more sweet because of that gruff and direct manner. He came just slightly before

## Death Notices

ANNOUNCEMENT, born, died peacefully, 52th May, Funeral on Friday 5th June, 1998, at St. Mary's Church, Crematorium, East End, 102, Donside, St. Barbara, 0171 822 5477.

BUTLER, born from Edward Ivan Oakley, 52th May, Funeral on Friday 5th June, 1998, at St. Mary's Church, Crematorium, East End, 102, Donside, St. Barbara, 0171 822 5477.

JACKSON, John Alan Everett, Sutton, 52th May, Funeral on Friday 5th June, 1998, at St. Mary's Church, Crematorium, East End, 102, Donside, St. Barbara, 0171 822 5477.

METCAL, born from Edward Ivan Oakley, 52th May, Funeral on Friday 5th June, 1998, at St. Mary's Church, Crematorium, East End, 102, Donside, St. Barbara, 0171 822 5477.

the new wave of Jewish writers, and maybe you felt his nose would have been put out of joint by our arrival. On the contrary, he welcomed us. His characters all lived in the real world, but they had dreams. And that was the wonderful thing about Wolf. It was this duality — these down-to-earth characters seeking the Holy Grail — that

captured my imagination. It seemed to elevate humanity; gave a beauty and dignity to the everlasting struggle. And this made me so respect his unique vision and talent. His output was prodigious and special. His world and his characters are everlasting and indelible.

Bernard Kops



## Diary

Matthew Norman

**T**HE Secret Art Of Government — a BBC2 documentary about the recherche Whitehall department (called GAO) which allocates paintings to the Government — offers a fascinating glimpse into ministerial souls. Take Robin Cook (to borrow from Max Miller). In his first press conference as Foreign Secretary, an enormous painting of a Nepalese Prince/Princess is seen on the office wall. Asked about redecorating, Cook says that this one has to go, and he later has it removed on the baffling grounds that it is "ideologically unsound". Indeed, he repeats this phrase in the press conference, insisting — even more confusingly — that it would be hard to replace because "all old paintings that are big are ideologically unsound". Well, it must make sense to him. Eventually, we learn, he did find an ideologically sound replacement. Any guesses? No? An absolutely enormous mirror. Vanity, vanity, thy name is Cook. Tomorrow we consider the office pictorial choice of my old friend Mandy Mandelson.

**T**HE art world is double blessed: tomorrow, a Fulham Road gallery will hold a private viewing of paintings (you will not find the phrase "insipid watercolours" here) by Paul Johnson. My sane and rational friend has been a very naughty boy of late, but we still love the silly old sausage to pieces, and hope to find the time to join him at the viewing.

**O**N the sports pages of the Sun, Paul Gascoigne is interviewed by Brian Woolnough. Mr Woolnough has a nice way of stringing together the quotes. "Playing for England is bigger than my life," says Gazza in one paragraph. "If that's the way he feels, that's the way he feels," he adds, of Hoddle, a few paragraphs later. "It isn't the end of my world." The back page headline is: "He (Hoddle) may as well have killed me."

**H**ER Majesty's strongest and most intriguing houseguest writes with important news. Charles Bronson, the poet and cartoonist whose sentence was recently ex-



tended by seven years for the taking of Israeli hostages (he demanded a cheese sandwich and a helicopter to Cuba), has been granted a signal military honour: he has received a letter from the Royal Green Jackets 2nd Battalion in Bosnia, requesting a signed photo, and asking his permission to make him the regimental mascot. Charles is felled, but has yet to decide whether to grant it. We hope he does. As the official representative of peace-keeping forces, who better than Charles? And besides, he makes a highly refreshing change from Melinda Messenger.

**C**ONTRARY to a reference in yesterday's item about the conversion to Judaism of Boris the Jackal Johnson, the actor Ron Moody is not late. The one-time Fagin is, in fact, extremely punctual, appearing on stage at the same time each night this week, in Cambridge, in a musical adaptation of The Canterville Ghost. We apologise for yet another unaccountably sloppy piece of journalism.

**I**N the Washington Post, a story about Viagra is entitled by the following paragraph. "Nine patients taking Viagra died during clinical trials, compared to one patient who took a fake pill as part of the test and died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound," the Post reports. "The company and the agency determined that those deaths were 'plausibly not related' to the drug."

## Tough Grip



## It won't be a proper war without Gazza. What else is football for?

Jonathan Freedland



**I**T'S lucky I'm not the England coach, because I would have picked Paul Gascoigne. OK, I know next to nothing about football. I don't support a club, I can barely kick a ball — but I do know that if you're the England manager, picking Gazza is part of the job description. It comes with the territory. Indeed, and it may sound presumptuous for a soccer ignoramus like myself to say this about one of the greatest footballers of his generation — Glenn Hoddle's decision suggests he doesn't understand what football is all about.

England's coach seems to think it's all a bloodless exercise in technical efficiency and robotic prowess. His talk of physical condition, fitness levels and the new breed of soccer "athletes" suggests Hoddle is less concerned to build a football team than a well-tuned machine. But what we soccer outsiders know is that football is not precision science. It's all about passion, fervour and deep, raging emotion — areas in which Paul Gascoigne remains a world-class performer.

That's why Gazza had earned his place in France, but it's also why football has become the most important game on the planet. The politicians understand it so do the money men and so, too, do Mr Hoddle's fellow international managers. Unlike him, they realise that soccer is much more than a mere sporting contest, contingent on such minor matters as a player's latest form. Stronger forces of national pride, tribal identity and human drama are at work — a lesson we are set to learn all over again in a tournament

which will dominate British life for the next five weeks.

Sky TV showed it understood soccer's devotion at the start of the season, when it promoted its Premiership coverage under the slogan, "It's Our Religion." Coca-Cola tagged along with "Eat Football, Sleep Football." The latest edition of Sponsorship News predicts that "early in the millennium, the World Cup will overtake the Olympic Games to become sport's greatest moneyspinner."

Politicians drew that same conclusion decades ago, ruling that football was far too important to play games with. It's striking that the World Cup is the only major global sporting event never to have fallen victim to an international boycott. While the Moscow Olympics of 1980 and the Los Angeles Games of 1984 both became battlefields of the cold war, the World Cup went ahead in 1982 without a hitch.

**O**F COURSE, it helped that those arch-boycotters, the Americans, did not find their footballing feet until after the fall of communism. In Italy '90, there was no Soviet bloc worth boycotting. But the chief cause of the World Cup's immunity from geo-politicalising is governments' fear of the power of the game. Most leaders of footballing nations know that soccer is bigger than they are — and that to suggest pulling out of the quadrennial soccer-fest is to risk popular insurrection.

How else to explain the absence of a campaign to keep Nigeria out of the coming finals? The Abacha regime's appalling human rights record has made Nigeria an emerg-

ing pariah nation and the object of heavy EU sanctions. Since those apply to France, Nigeria should have been blocked from taking part. Yet almost no one — except the lone voice of Glens Kinnock, raised in the European parliament — has suggested the ban be implemented. It's as if boycotts are all very well for the boring old Olympic Games — but football simply matters too much.

As Bill Shankly famously remarked, "Football isn't a matter of life and death — it's more important than that." The Colombian defender Andres Escobar proved the point in 1994 when, days after he had scored an own goal against the United States which led to his team's ejection from the tournament, he was shot 12 times outside a bar in Medellin. "A costly error," as John Motson might say. And, of course, there was 1989's Football War between Honduras and El Salvador — an armed conflict which left 6,000 dead and which began with a dispute over a soccer game. "Football may have been just the catalyst," writes Chris Taylor in his new book *The Beautiful Game*, "but would the people of El Salvador and Honduras have got so worked up about volleyball, or a beauty contest?"

They would not. But what explains this degree of fervour, apparently peculiar to soccer? It helps that football is the people's game, of course: the rules are simple and, with no need for special equipment, it costs nothing to play. But the appeal is deeper. My guess is that it beats the likes of tennis, boxing and Olympic athletics because it is about teams. Whole peoples can get

behind a football team because they are bigger than any one individual: they become instead representatives of the tribe. "They are wearing the flag and going to war," says Channel 5 sports anchor Jonny Gould. Football is battle by other means, with the 11 men our chosen force. No wonder Saddam Hussein is said to have beaten the soles of the Iraqi national team after its failure to qualify for this month's finals: they had inflicted a collective humiliation on Iraq no less than those soldiers cut down on the road to Basra.

So much more is at stake on the football field than mere gymnastics with a plastic sphere. The heroes of the game understood that: that's what makes them magical. Their home nations understand it, too. That's why Italy has sent Roberto Baggio to France even though he is, like Gazza, 31 years old. Germany would not be without Lothar Matthaus even though he is a creaky 37. And the Saudis have found a place for their own Gazza, Saeed Owairan — even though he was jailed for six months for immoral behaviour after he was "found in the incriminating presence of drink and women."

Paul Gascoigne is like them — not fast or clinical, but capable of inspiring his teammates and pulling off an 89th-minute dash of brilliance. If football was played on a computer spreadsheet, then maybe Gazza should have been dumped. But since it involves human flesh and blood, with an uncanny way of entering hearts across the globe, Paul Gascoigne — unlike football itself — should not be coming home.

## Children of despair

Polly Toynbee



**S**OCIAL engineers since Plato have suggested that children be taken away from their parents to be reared by the state as model citizens. Communists, Nazis, the Australian Aborigine programme, kibbutzim, British orphanages packing off children to work in the colonies — almost every society is littered with Utopian experiments to uproot a supposed underclass in an attempt to re-sculpt society from the beginning. High minded in intent, they were all, of course, inhumane, usually brutal and punitive.

We still do it now, though with different intentions. Fifty thousand children are in the care of the state. Not because we think we do them good, but because the state is the parent of last resort when all else fails. Since we no longer isolate ourselves that this is some social good in itself but a sign of failure, these children have been left to drift in a desolate limbo, part of no project, aimless, expensive and lost.

Since the war, report after report has described the disastrous failure with these children. Last autumn Sir William Utting produced a devastating study which led to the setting up of a ministerial task force, to report in late summer. If policy-makers need another nudge, they should have been watching last night's Undercover Britain on Channel 4. Secret filming inside three private children's homes revealed abysmal neglect and squalor, children left alone to do nothing, without education or stimulation, watching television, or pacing up and down all day, without games or attention of any kind. One young boy had ballooned from 11 to 18 stone through neglect.

But there is a danger that such stories and all the paedophile scandals may paper over the greater scandal of the way all children in care are treated. Abuse stories imply that if the bad apples were weeded out, everything else would be OK. But the stark statistics on "ordinary" care are themselves shocking. Three quarters of children in care leave with no qualifications of any kind, 10 times more likely than others to be excluded from school. Their many moves between homes and foster families — 15 moves in three years is not unusual — make "care" a meaningless word. Half of care leavers are unemployed. The Downing Street Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) produced a brief section on children in care in their recent report on social exclusions. They set a target for local authorities to ensure that half of all children in care achieve some qualifications by the year 2000. We have yet to see whether the SEU has the teeth to really make things happen on the ground with local authorities. This will be one easy test of whether they are just another think tank or a genuinely effective and powerful arm of government.

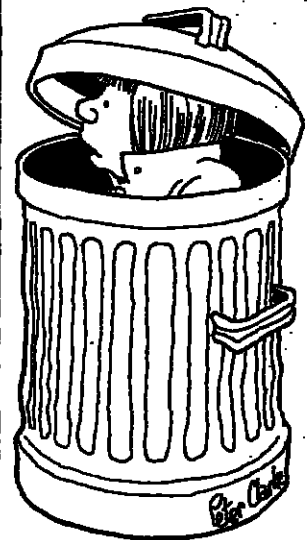
**O**THER outcomes of care are just as bad. Only one per cent of children enter care because of offending behaviour. They may be deeply disturbed when they arrive — but they are not yet criminals. However, 38 per cent of all young prisoners have been in care. One in seven girls leaves care either pregnant or with a baby. Children from care are four times more likely to kill themselves and they make up a third of the home care trainees. The irony is that there is so much hand-wringing about out-of-control children — and yet the same state that over the years keeps expressing moral angst about bad parenting is the very worst parent of them all. What wouldn't those Utopian social engineers from other eras have given for the chance to get their hands on 50,000 of the most troubled and troublesome children? Ten years old is the average age of entering the care Gulag —

young enough to rescue their tilted lives and save many of them from a life of misery or worse.

Adding up what they will cost the state in future crime and social need dwarfs even the huge sums we already spend on merely containing them. For once, money really isn't the problem. These children cost anything up to £1,800 a week in care — six times what it would cost to send them to Eton. For that sum many get no education worth the name, no psychotherapy, (though they must need it more than any other group in the land), no consistent parent figure, a largely untrained, fast-changing, low-paid staff and barely a social worker.

Yet these children are a relatively easy social problem. The SEU is struggling to find ways to turn around 1300 of the worst housing estates, a vast, intractable, multi-disciplinary social nightmare. While here are just 50,000 children in the state's hands already, waiting to have good done to them. For anyone with itchy social engineering fingers, this is the dream experiment. You can measure how they are when they arrive, how much better/worse they are when they leave, what happens to them next and exactly what it costs. You can pilot treatments, therapies and education programmes and test the relative value of foster care and children's homes. In just a few years it should be possible to boast of a great social policy success. Why has no one done anything until now?

Now we wait for the ministerial task force to report. The word is that they will require local authorities to continue to care for children into their early 20s, the way most parents usually do. They have discussed at length the last two decades' policy of putting as many children as possible



For anyone with itchy social engineering fingers, this is the dream experiment

into foster homes, because it was cheaper and deemed to be safer. But untrained, lowly paid foster parents may not provide the best care. Without help and support, too many foster placements break down, leading to the appalling number of moves each child makes. This will be one easy test of whether they are just another think tank or a genuinely effective and powerful arm of government.

As ever, the testing time for the Government's resolution will come after the Task Force report, when we see if they manage to push through their recommendations. Making social policy is easy — making it happen is something else, especially in dealing with local authorities. Among all this government's admirable social reforming zeal, their effectiveness will be easiest to assess with this one small group of children. The outcome will be plain for us all to see.

Prescott can't keep blaming the Tories for the great train fiasco

## Off the rails

Keith Harper

**R**AIL privatisation is not working. It has been nothing short of an unmitigated disaster and John Prescott cannot continue to blame the Tories indefinitely.

When Sir George Young, John Major's transport secretary, boarded the first privatised train from Twickenham two years ago, even he could not have realised that the result of the salami-slicing policy of the Conservatives would be so devastating.

An industry cut up into more than 100 different parts, and sold off at obscene speed for at most a third of its real value, was always going to create problems. Stripped of its cohesion, it has become so fragmented that few decision-makers are prepared to take responsibility for what goes on outside their own patch.

The effects unfold on a

daily basis (and there are never-ending complaints from Guardian readers).

In the past few weeks alone, rail industry managers have expressed fears at the level of rail safety, and the rail franchise director has chastised operating companies for bad service.

Concern about safety has been mounting. Rail is still the safest mode of travel, but the industry has been taken to task by the rail inspectorate for allowing commercial considerations to dominate track repair decisions. And cowboy companies are being allowed to break into the market without proper supervision.

Ludicrously, the rail franchise director, John O'Brien, has limited powers to penalise rail companies who under-perform. With the fat subsidies given by the Tories as an inducement to take the goods away, the companies can afford to pay the relatively small penalties imposed for

poor punctuality or for running short trains.

The only noticeable change for the passenger has been the emergence of different liveries among the competing companies, adding a dash of new colour to what are otherwise dreary journeys.

## Concern about safety mounts. Cowboys are allowed in

Under British Rail, the fares system sometimes bordered on the incomprehensible. Today it is ridiculous: wide and unfair variations which leave passengers gasping with incredulity.

How, for instance, can the return fare between Southampton and London be, at £40.60, almost double the £22.30 charged in the

reverse direction? The regulator should insist on uniformity from the train operators. Penalising passengers because they happen to live in different parts of the country is intolerable.

The trains are full and the operators, still living off the subsidies from the Tories, don't care.

Mr Prescott has been able to harness the public's hatred of rail privatisation to good effect. Telling us that the Government cannot be held responsible for this woeful legacy, and that he will act to get it right, produces a favourable gut reaction from the frustrated commuter. The deputy prime minister has promised that his transport white paper next month will reassure rail users about the Government's intentions.

But will it? Mr Prescott has an awful lot of juggling to do. Rail is not going to be re-nationalised. The new system can only be tam-

pered with, because the train companies are here for at least another five years, taking us beyond the next election.

His plans for a strategic rail authority to exercise more control from the centre cannot be realised for at least another year, depending on Mr Prescott's legislative priorities in the next Parliamentary session.

But a decision to leave the issue unresolved, banking on the public's acceptance that Labour inherited a mess from the Tories, would be dangerous. The public has a notoriously short memory.

Over the next 12 months, the industry will produce still more fat cats, its reliability will still be held up to question, and a series of damaging cases, culminating in the Southall train inquiry, will show that it is not as safe as it should be. If the Government strings out important decisions, it may well string itself up instead.



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## Iren of air

## Next step for Nuclear Five

Make disarmament real

THE NUCLEAR summit tomorrow in Geneva will reflect a sense of utter hopelessness over the new arms race in South Asia. In advance of the foreign ministers' meeting of the Nuclear Five, diplomats have already been seeking to lower expectations. The US, says the State Department, will not press for sanctions: the task is now to work out a concerted strategy to stop the Indo-Pakistan rivalry from escalating further. Sanctions, the US has surprisingly discovered, don't work. The best to be hoped for is to find ways of promoting "dialogue and reconciliation" between the two countries. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the bankrupt nature of the anti-proliferation strategy of the nuclear club. The atomic genie is out of the bottle: let's try and persuade them not to fight but just be nice instead.

Robin Cook was equally hesitant on Monday in his statement to the Commons. The Group of Eight's foreign ministers, who meet next week in London, will also have modest objectives. They will "coordinate the response" of the G8, said Mr Cook, and seek — what else? — to "promote dialogue." Better still, he added, they were in favour of meaningful dialogue. Of course. If it were that simple, then the Kashmir dispute would have been solved long ago.

It is indeed very hard, probably impossible, to wind back the clock and to draw the line where we are now may seem the only option. When the Iranian foreign minister stirs the pot by hailing a Muslim bomb, and China hints that it may be forced to resume

testing, then a policy of damage limitation begins to appear the best option. True, the Iranian rhetoric should not be taken too seriously. And China is only drawing attention to the clause in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which allows countries to resume testing if their "supreme national security" is threatened. This is a disingenuous argument from Beijing. India's modest test cannot possibly pose any threat to China which would require further testing of its own considerable arsenal. Beijing's real purpose is to dissuade the Indian government from continuing to rant about the "Chinese threat," and perhaps stack up a bargaining card before Clinton's visit. But it illustrates a serious point: the CTBT (still by the way unratified by three of the nuclear five including the US) contains — if it should ever come into force — a standard let-out clause for any nuclear signatory. No wonder that the charge of nuclear hypocrisy convinces so many in Delhi and other Third World capitals.

Is there any alternative to pessimism, not to say cynicism, at a state of affairs which always existed on paper but has now been translated by the Indo-Pakistan escalation into reality? That is, that nuclear weapons are here to stay and with them the ineluctable expansion of the nuclear club. This prospect may give quiet satisfaction to some people. It has refurbished the plea of various intelligence agencies for more funds to pursue the monitoring of alleged "rogue" states. It has strengthened the case of those proud to be nuclear that abolition is a pipe-dream.

We have two choices. We may acquiesce in such super-realism and hope nothing too dreadful will happen in our lifetimes. Or we may protest that this is intolerable: that the world must not be cast back into the

nuclear shadows from which we were told we had emerged. The Indian proposal for an anti-nuclear convention may be cynical in its current intent. But a new, serious, sustained, effort has to be made to begin to move towards abolition, and the Nuclear Five have to make it. That is what they should start talking about in Geneva.

## Spinners' web

Vital boundaries are endangered

A PUBLIC performance by Sir Bernard Ingham is not the novelty it once would have been. Since leaving his post as Lady Thatcher's press spokesman in 1989, Sir Bernard has made the Bunkum and Balderdash Show, previously performed only in private for Westminster lobby correspondents, available to television chatshows, student classes, after-dinner audiences and, until its reconstruction as the People's Daily, to readers of the Daily Express.

Yesterday Sir Bernard enjoyed a session with the Commons Public Administration Select Committee in which to air his pyrotechnic views on "poodle" journalism and the creeping politicisation of the Government Information Service (GIS) under New Labour in general and his Downing St successor-but-three, Alastair Campbell, in particular.

It was, as ever, a lively performance from the Emeritus Professor of Spin Medicine. But was it an accurate portrait of the new regime? Up to a point. It is true that Mr Campbell is not a career civil servant, but belongs to a hybrid category of Whitehall appointee, a special adviser who can wear a Labour Party hat when needs must. Every senior minister has had such advisers for 25 years and defenders of the system argue

that it enables GIS staff to maintain their political neutrality, leaving party dirt-dishing to the Campbells, Charlie Whelans and their ilk.

It is also true that Labour has both invigorated and centralised the Whitehall information network to ensure that the government is seen to be united and "on message." New technologies, those faxes, mobiles, e-mail and the dreaded pager, make that both possible and necessary. Even Sir Bernard (though he denied it) would have to wear a pager now.

More worrying (and this is what the select committee is investigating) is the resignation or dismissal of at least half a dozen departmental information chiefs since election day, amid claims that they resisted improper pressure to put party political "spin" on some of those myriad press releases churned out each day.

Each case is different. But there are fair grounds for claiming that the boundaries between neutral officialdom and political propaganda are being further eroded by this image-conscious government. But, like so much about New Labour, this vice has been inherited from the Thatcher era. Who was it who used to ask if an official was "One of Us"? Come to think of it, which civil service press spokesman hurried himself upon her funeral pyre?

## Coded products

How long can humans last out?

THERE are no plans for celebration but it is 25 years since the invention of that icon of the times — the barcode. From a humble start in an IBM research laboratory it has been slowly taking over the world (and we haven't seen the half of it yet). Initial

suspicions that they might shortchange customers at tills have been allayed. We have even got used to the way they are used to build up profiles of our spending for customer loyalty schemes. Usage has spread from supermarkets (for which they were originally designed) to grocery stores, petrol stations, lawyers' offices, betting shops, pop art, government departments (including the Inland Revenue).

They are the *esperanto* of merchandising — tracking stocks, work in progress, ordering, routing and sales. Some transport companies use bar codes so you can track where in the world your package is at any one moment through the internet. Technology will soon enable people to scan products at home to create a virtual shopping list. Newspapers have not been unaffected — the bar code on the front of the Guardian includes data about the price, the day and the week of the year.

So far bar codes have been confined to things, but during the next 25 years this will surely change. Already experiments have been done with bees which have had minute barcodes attached to their backs — enabling every movement in and out of the hive to be recorded by laser scanners. Humans will be next. Barcodes are already used to tag babies in hospitals so alarms ring if an unauthorised person takes them out of the ward. Security guards are tracked by scanners reading barcodes to validate their routes. Sooner or later some bright spark will suggest that everyone should have their own barcode so they are recognised everywhere from bank cash machines to the front door of the office. It hasn't yet got to the stage of "I have a barcode therefore I am" but Descartes would surely have amended his proposition to take account of an age in which so much thinking is done for us.

## Letters to the Editor

### Talkback: new lines of attack

THE idea, as Jeremy Paul suggests (2 others, June 2), that "one can never be sure that no influence is being brought to bear" in the matter of book reviews and the Culture Shop number placed beneath them has been aired to some extent. The reviewer's opinion can be bought to imply that he or she is going to be paid enough to justify the sale. Well, not on this paper, we're not. The only influence Stephen Moss, my literary editor, ever brings to bear on me is to suggest that I buy him a pint when he takes me for a drink, on the grounds that he has "left" his wallet in his "other jacket". Which, when you think about it, is as far from corrupting his reviewers as it is possible to get.

Nicholas Lezard, London.

HOW fascinating to read the views of Gary Rhodes on cars and women "Cars are like women: they can look like the greatest thing in the world, but if they can't perform well, forget it" (Me and my motor, June 1). Can't you find people with something interesting to say?

Deena Roberts, London.

YOUR headline "Hague alters line of attack" (June 2) leaves me confused. Was there a previous line of attack? If so, why were we not informed?

John Ashwell, Eastleigh, Hants.

IT'S high time people stopped being rotten about Ann Widdecombe's alleged change of attitude to Michael Howard. Isn't it obvious that what she said was: "He has something of the knight about him?" Colin Attenborough, Ely, Cambs.

## Why Gazza was kebabbed

ENGLAND are not going to France to win the World Cup (I was drunk the night before I was axed, June 2). Brazil, or some equally gifted bunch of individuals, will win it. The role of any England team in such circumstances is to lose gloriously. Taking away the main character, Gazza, is like trying to perform The Merry Wives of Windsor without Falstaff: it does not work as theatre.

World Cup football is not about 22 athletes on a field and beat on me to suggest that I buy him a pint when he takes me for a drink, on the grounds that he has "left" his wallet in his "other jacket". Which, when you think about it, is as far from corrupting his reviewers as it is possible to get.

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back Mary Poppins and send Twiddle to a monastery. Duncan Mackay, Twyford, Berkshire.

GLENN HODDLE said on television last night that he had about the earthquake in Afghanistan and that "put it all in perspective". No wonder England are performing so poorly, when their coach thinks there's other things in life than football. He'll be telling us next it's only a game. John Carpenter, Morpeth, Northumberland.

ANYONE seeking an explanation for the yawning gulf in technique, fitness and skill between the world's best players and our own is referred to as a "lifestyle management" between British footballers and their Italian (or German, or French, or Norwegian) counterparts need look no further than the widespread surprise generated by the announcement by the coach of the national football team that he wants athletes in his squad. Nick Rider, London.

PAUL Gascoigne stumbles down the road and orders a kebab in a successful attempt to forestall his hangover. Else-

where, Alan Shearer washes down his Big Mac with a benzene-fuelled cola. Gazza is out, but Shearer is in, carrying the nation's hopes. Have Glenn Hoddle and his dieticians got it all wrong? Phil Syrris, Bristol.

ONE 150g portion of shish kebab with salad in pitta bread will provide only 24 per cent of its energy from fat. This is well within the Department of Health guidelines of fat intake to be no more than 30 per cent of total energy consumed.

Perhaps more emphasis should be placed on the damaging effects of cigarette smoking and excess alcohol consumption on Gazza's health. Emile Richmond, Research dietician, Fazakerley Hospital, Liverpool.

VIRGIN Radio offer a "New Listener's Hotline" for people to say what they like about it. Do you think they can be prevailed upon to offer an Ex-Listeners' Hotline for people such as myself put off by the arrogance of their proprietor in defending his drinking buddies and the way in which news bulletins reflect the proprietor's views? Jon Keen, Crowthorne, Berkshire.

ably, not since the Beatles have we seen a British group dominate the global market to such an extent.

The loss of one Spice Girl is unfortunate, but not terminal. The other four have stated their intention to carry on. In the end, the fans will determine whether the show will go on or not. The music critics, Steve Hounsham, Skipton, North Yorks.



## Which way do you vote on PR?

IN MAKING the case for proportional representation, Polly Toynbee (Comment, June 1) overlooks one crucial point: proportional representation means fairness between parties. This is not the same as fairness to voters.

In order to rebalance the democratic process away from party managers and spin doctors and back to the electors, we need a voting system that is broadly party proportional and extends voter choice. Fortunately, we have such a system in the UK already: the single transferable vote. Let us hope the voters of Northern Ireland use the electoral power STV gives them wisely, on June 25, when they express their preferences for members of the new assembly. Tom Ellis, Wrexham.

CONTRARY to what Polly Toynbee says, the shifting of power away from Parliament towards local communities represents neither a cancer nor a democratic deficit. On the contrary, it is what is needed to make our politics healthy, she says. "Local democracy is dying... for lack of recognisable communities people will vote for". She has

not recognised the potential importance of the Local Government and Rating Act, one of the last passed by the Conservatives, which allows for the creation of community or parish councils in urban areas, and would create the very communities she says local democracy is dying for.

Proportional representation is not a *sine qua non* for the reform of British politics. It is simply an attempt to keep in place the status quo, the centralisation of power in Parliament. PR would still leave us as subjects. The more important question is: how do we get the powers of citizens? Michael Birchmeil, Bristol.

POLLY Toynbee is right to advocate proportional representation so that never again can an ideological minority hold a stranglehold on power for 18 years. But electors will see party lists as flocks of political sheep. Proportional representation is a denial of real democracy except in forms forcing every candidate to submit individually to the electorate. Frederic Stansfield, Canterbury, Kent.

## I may have hated your book but I'd like to lunch you

WHY DOES our Culture Secretary react (As T S Eliot said, May 29) to my review of his book, *Creative Britain*, rather than that of the better known David Hare, who said in the Observer that whoever was responsible for the style should be shot? All I said was that it was sentimentality. The reason is not that Mr Smith is under-educated, but the reverse. Our comfortable, well-schooled Culture Secretary is a dismal example of English class contortion: hence his unclassy, condescending prose.

Descending into banal little mental categories, Smith labels me an "unashamed elitist". For me, an elitist is someone who condescends, for example by writing that "The singers Rod Sten and Jazzy B are putting black music on the map". As a former (sadly not very elite) jazz drummer, I found that both ignorant (Sten and B are not singers) and pretentious. Who does Christopher Robert Smith PhD (Can-

tab) imagine he is talking down to?

He should get together with David Blunkett, with whom I lunched recently at Blunkett's invitation. Is Labour's aim in culture and education to patronise, or do as Blunkett (no PhD) does, and strive upwards? How does it help him for Smith to write trashy books to ingratiate himself with the very people whose horizons his wiser colleague is trying to expand? I would be happy to lunch Smith, at my expense to spare the arts budget. We have much in common. He went to a fine direct grant school, as did I. He studied at Cambridge. So did I. He sees himself as a bold, anti-elitist spirit in a socialist government. Neither am I. George Walden, London.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. The Country Diary is on Page 9

## But is it art?

### Mark Steel



OK. He's not a tragically flawed, complex and contradictory genius. He just got pissed and had a kebab. Van Gogh was tragic, because despite his talent he was depressed, skid and out his ear. He wouldn't carry quite the same mystique if his low point was the night he split chilli sauce on the way home from the Amsterdam Kebab Palace. Even if it was during the build-up to the world sun-

flower-painting championships. Nor would the film *Amadeus* have been quite as poignant, if it had been the story of how the royal court unfairly punished a great young musician by confiscating his plastic tits.

But every broadsheet editorial yesterday discussed the matter in earnest prose. And Monday's *Newsnight* began with a 20-minute item on the issue, including an interview with a psychologist. Maybe that shrink will end up on the World Cup expert summary with "For Belgium to get back into this match, their midfield need to confront their repressed homosexuality. What do you reckon, Des?"

What's brought this on is the changing attitudes of the middle class towards sport, especially football. Cambridge graduates in the media have become devotees, when 10 years ago they'd have been proud not to know that it was

FA Cup Final day. But they don't want to appear as slob, so they describe it as art, drama, theatre, tragedy, ballet and nouvelle cuisine.

Well it's not. The reason I enjoy going to football is not because it's art or theatre but because it's stupid. The brilliant thing about it is you don't have to think anything at all to enjoy it, except "Please, please go in their goal" and "Oh Christ, don't go in our goal." If the goalkeeper doesn't have much to do, you don't think "I wonder why the playwright included that character then. Perhaps he symbolises our fear of change."

Intellectuals have always tried to justify their passion for sport by classifying it as art. Even the Marxist CLR James, in his magnificent book *Beyond A Boundary*, included a bankers chapter which argued that cricket is an art. "What matters in cricket is not the end result but, as in all the arts... that individuality can flourish," he

claimed. But if a batsman presents a beautifully graceful square cut a split second too early, he might be clean bowled. And what would the MCC have to say if he yelled at the umpire "But that shot was a metaphor for the decay in modern free thinking, which makes it a no-ball, you Philistine."

Clearly sport reflects society, but that doesn't make it art. Viv Richards's threatening panther-like posture at the wicket was, in its contrast to the upright English stance, an anti-imperialist statement. Steve Davis made himself popular in the Eighties not because he was a Tory but because he played like a Tory, turgid, heartless and concerned only with amassing maximum points, without even pretending that some of them may trickle down to the other players. But reflecting is not the same as expressing.

Similarly, the attempts to make Olympic competitions out of activities like ice skat-

ing and dancing with a hoop result in events which are neither sport nor art. Otherwise anything could become a sport if you got a row of judges to give marks to it. You could have Olympic ironing, with commentators yelling "Stir's done so well on the sleeves that the Russian judge has given her five point nine."

THE MOST common accusation made against sport, especially cricket, from people who aren't interested in it, is that it's pointless. To which there are two possible answers. One is to claim that to witness a Berglund goal or a Lara century is like experiencing a Yeats poem, a John Coltrane solo, etc. etc. The other is to agree. For that is where the passion, drama and excitement of sport ultimately comes from: its utter pointlessness. What sort of useless sport would it be that had a point to it? Premier League shopping perhaps?

Then even if you lose you've got all your vegetables for the week.

Sports stars can be incredibly talented, innovative and breathtaking, but they're not geniuses. They're just either better or worse than their opponents. They can, however, be tragic. But that requires more than being upset because the manager doesn't think you're fit enough. I don't know much about Shakespeare, but I doubt whether any of his tragedies revolve around a character called Hoddle calling a soldier into a room and saying "Geordius, I bear thee sad tidings. Thou goest not to France, for the lager and kebab hath swelled thine paunch such that the 90 minutes battle shall be 85 too long." Following which everyone somehow ends up stabbed.

If you're middle class and have been converted to the joys of watching sport, that's fine. But come to terms with it. You're a slob like the rest of us.

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Executive Financial Editor: Ben Clissett  
Financial Editor: Alex Brummer  
Telephone: 0171-239-9610  
Fax: 0171-833-4456

# FinanceGuardian

## Building society pays £5 million to escape clutches of Royal Bank Midshires braced for bids

Julia Finch and Liz Stuart

**B**IRMINGHAM Midshires Building Society was last night bracing itself for an outbreak of competing bids as it finally freed itself from the clutches of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

The Midshires paid £5 million, £5 per member, to the RBS yesterday lunchtime to end a £630 million takeover deal agreed with the bank last August.

The Wolverhampton-based society is now free to start formal talks with the Halifax — which has already said it is willing to pay £780 million for the society. The Halifax bid would generate a windfall payment of £750 for each Midshires member.

A spokesman said the society is also expecting other bidders to emerge or is willing to go it alone and float on

the Stock Exchange as a separately listed bank if it cannot find a partner that will preserve jobs, retain its name, give it autonomy — and pay the right price.

A sale to another financial organisation would be the cheapest option and the society admitted that a deal with a third party was "the preferred option".

Potential bidders rumoured to be interested include the Allied Irish Bank, which recently bought Bristol and West building society, Bank of Ireland and Lloyds TSB. But the Halifax is still the only known bidder.

If a deal with the Halifax is eventually negotiated, the Midshires will have to pay an additional £10 million to the RBS. The extra payment will not apply to any other potential bidder.

The Midshires described the additional payment demanded by the RBS in the event of a deal with the Hal-

ifax as "small minded". The spokesman said: "We are paying it under duress. We don't think it is fair, but it is the only way for us to get out of this and move forward."

The £5 million payment is okay, but the demand for an extra £10 million is the result of small-minded egos. It is spiteful."

A deal with the Halifax should not be taken for granted, however. The terms of its takeover agreement with the RBS had prevented any detailed discussions to take place and the Midshires last night said it will consider all other offers.

The society's spokesman said it would not necessarily favour the highest bid. "We will take approaches from all-comers," he said. "We will then sift through them and choose a partner according to price, job preservation and brand preservation. This is not about slash and burn."

The Halifax has promised to retain the Midshires name for three years and has only said that it would "attempt to manage the merger" without compulsory redundancies. Ironically, Halifax has been widely rumoured to have been in merger talks with RBS, although neither side would comment.

Insiders at Lloyds said chief executive Peter Ellwood was not interested in acquiring the Midshires because it is too small.

Analysts also doubted whether the Midshires would attract many additional bids. Several pointed out that the value of mortgage banks had declined since the Halifax tabled its offer and said they did not believe higher bids were likely.

Midshires denies that the original deal with RBS was poorly negotiated. "At the time we were valued by JP Morgan," said the spokesman.

### Countdown to a get-out

August 1997: Royal Bank of Scotland announces it is in exclusive talks to buy Birmingham Midshires for up to £630 million.

March 1998: Details of talks between Halifax and Midshires leak out. Halifax confirms it has offered £780 million for the society.

April: Birmingham Midshires offers Royal Bank of Scotland £5 million to release it from the exclusive takeover agreement.

May: It emerges that, to free Birmingham Midshires from the deal, the Royal Bank of Scotland demands an extra £10 million if the Halifax bid goes ahead.

June: Midshires confirms it has agreed to the £10 million condition. The deal with the Royal Bank of Scotland is officially called off and the society is free to talk to other bidders.

### Notebook

## GEC puts itself over a gun barrel



Edited by Alex Brummer

**T**HE flotation of GEC's jointly-owned power unit, GEC Alsthom, is the most significant move by Britain's leading manufacturing company since Lord Simpson took the helm in September 1996. Lord Simpson was never keen on the joint venture he inherited and has been eager to simplify them while concentrating GEC's future on its core electronics and defence businesses, largely in the GEC-Marconi division.

The joint ventures were put together by the company's creator, Lord Westwood, in 1989-90, both as means of deterring predators and because he realised that globalisation meant that even the biggest national champions needed partners.

Of the three joint ventures he formed at the time, GEC Alsthom, GDA in the white goods sector and GPT (the joint venture with Siemens) in telecoms, the power venture was undoubtedly the most commercially successful. The group established itself as a market leader as a producer of trains — the TGV is perhaps its best known product — and as a maker of the most efficient combined cycle turbines in the world.

It was particularly adept at selling power units into fast-growing Asian markets. In many ways the power arm of GEC was the star and ensured that the UK had a global presence in both the train-making and power industries.

This is the business which GEC is now unloading. It is initially selling 50.3 per cent of the shares through a public offering that values the enterprise at up to £4.5 billion and will allow GEC to take a cash dividend likely to be in excess of £800 million. The timing is useful. It is the first big share offering by a large private-sector manufacturer in Europe for some time and comes when equity markets are at or close to their peaks.

The downside for potential buyers will be the vulnerability of the new company to Asian markets where it has large order books.

No doubt Lord Simpson hopes to redeploy some of the capital into GEC Marconi, with the possibility of bidding for bits of the US defence industry or eventually carving out that elusive deal with old adversary, British Aerospace.

All of this is certainly more exciting for GEC shareholders than they were used to under the previous management. But critics, looking across the international horizon, might question the logic of cashing-in a hugely successful, peaceful manufacturing business where the Anglo-French nature of the company has been advantageous — so as to focus more closely on the defence

businesses when governments from Washington to London are busy scaling down military budgets.

The new GEC will be ever more dependent on selling weapons systems into emerging markets, not an alluring prospect given what has been seen in Indonesia and the Indian sub-continent. As GEC's emeritus chairman Lord Westwood contemplates a new career as the largest shareholder in a Bond Street antique retailer, he may be puzzling over the direction taken by his successor.

### Fool's gold

**T**HE 14 per cent jump in profits of the National Lottery operator Camelot was never going to be welcome. The lottery occupies a special place in the national psyche and any cash that accrues to the commercial sector is going to be an easy target. Given these circumstances, Camelot does not help itself with its over-generous and less than transparent approach to remuneration.

The overall amount paid to directors in the latest financial year is barely up at £2.4 million. But this is a misleading figure, in that it starts from the previous year's swollen base. Moreover, when the figures are broken down, the lottery bosses continue to cock-a-snook at the public with the lacklustre chief executive Tim Holey claiming an 8 per cent increase to £338,000 — almost twice the level of increase in average earnings.

This is very foolish on a number of counts. Although Camelot was no more than an onlooker in the libel action between Richard Branson and Guy Snowdon, former boss of GTC, the court battle focused attention on Camelot's performance and the licence renewal. Given that the company is now so much in the public eye, it has a responsibility to act more ethically than anyone else.

The real question for the government to ask is whether a successor could do better? Certainly, technologically the system has been virtually flawless — which is more than can be said for some of Richard Branson's enterprises, most notably Virgin Rail.

As Camelot has pointed out, the efficiency of its operation, which produced a higher yield than the average of the world's leading lotteries, led to an extra £330 million raised for good causes last year. Moreover, it is now also giving the interest earned on unclaimed prizes to charity, yielding a further £5 million.

Could anyone else do it better? There are public sector institutions, most notably the Post Office, which perform profitably and efficiently. There are also mutual building societies, which have demonstrated that they can be more successful than the newly converted banks, by returning excess profits to members.

If Camelot could demonstrate a more caring sharing approach, rather than being so focused on enriching directors and shareholders, it might command more public support.

## Chancellor will get euro elbow

Stephen Bates in Brussels

**G**ORDON Brown faces a humiliating humiliation tomorrow at the hands of Britain's European partners when he will be excluded formally from the first private meeting of the 11 finance ministers whose countries are participating in the single currency.

The Chancellor, who has claimed repeatedly that Britain is taking a central place in Europe, is expected to say a few apologetic words before he has to leave.

Mr Brown is attending the meeting of the so-called Euro-XI committee in his capacity as chairman of the finance ministers' council during the British presidency of the EU but will leave when the 11 get down to discussing the launch of the currency.

He will be allowed to remain only while the rest talk about formal establishment of the body. The Chancellor's opening remarks will be expected to do no more than welcome Euro-XI.

The British Government fought strongly to prevent the establishment of what UK ministers privately insist will be an informal, unimportant gathering. Participating states say, however, that the body will take policy decisions on interest rates and monetary policy which are bound to affect Britain.

"When it is set up, he [Mr Brown] will leave it to its work," said Dominique Strauss-Kahn, France's finance minister and the main champion of the new committee.

Britain's attempt to block establishment of the Euro-XI committee ended in the "Luxembourg compromise", agreed at last December's summit after a row between Britain and France.

That agreement allows non-participating countries to attend meetings when issues of interest to them are discussed — although at what point they will be called in, or who will decide what their interests are, has not been settled.

Tomorrow's meeting will take place in the elegant surroundings of Semmingen castle in Luxembourg.

The committee will meet monthly, shadowing the regular meetings of Ecofin, the finance ministers' committee in which all 15 states take part.

Mr Brown will be replaced in the chair by Rudolph Eisinger, finance minister of Austria, which takes over presidency of the EU from Britain on July 1.

Britain will not be allowed to attend next month's meeting although the four "out" countries will be able to sit in on September's gathering so they can see what they are missing.

On the agenda for tomorrow's meeting is an analysis of the macro-economic conditions against which the Euro-zone's budgets are operating and the prospects for next year, when the currency will get under way.

The participating 11 will then adjourn for a celebratory dinner and ritual press conference before joining the four "out" countries — Britain, Sweden, Denmark and Greece — for the formal Ecofin meeting the following day.

What will Mr Brown do after he is shown the door at Semmingen? "I suppose he'll go and have dinner in Luxembourg," a diplomatic source said.

### Pastures new for Poirot



On the case: Hercule Poirot (played by David Suchet) is flanked by Hastings and Japp in the TV adaptation of the tales

## Booker to arrest profits decline

Roger Cowe unmasks Agatha Christie sale as group concentrates on food

**F**OOD group Booker yesterday unveiled a break-up which could see the famous name disappear as a public company. The disposal programme will see the sale of rights to Agatha Christie's books as well as the disposal of a string of peripheral businesses in food and agribusiness. But Booker will still sponsor Britain's most prestigious literary prize, which bears its name.

Once the disposal programme has been completed, chairman Jonathan Taylor will step down after nearly 40 years with the

company. He will hand over to Alan Smith, the present deputy chairman who led the review of group operations.

Booker has to choose between four candidates as chief executive, a post vacant since March when Charles Bowen paid the penalty for underperformance. Mr Taylor said the group had been too ambitious in making the Nurdin & Peacock takeover at the same time as a huge UK reorganisation.

A decision to focus on the near-£5 billion food distribution business follows a

review of strategy and was accompanied by a third profit warning in a year. Booker said that business has been poor so far this year and six-month profits will be "substantially below" last year's.

Last year profits had already fallen by almost a fifth. This year's are likely to be even lower than was expected three months ago and the dividend payment will be cut.

After reviewing the group's businesses, which range from salmon farming in the Atlantic to poultry breeding in the US, the board decided to concentrate on cash-and-carry operations and a growing UK distribution business to restaurants.

Deputy chairman Alan Smith said: "In food distribution we are the leading player in a big market. We have made substantial investment in it in recent years which we believe will yield benefits. It is appropriate to drive it forward as the core business."

But he admitted that the board might agree to sell out to one of a number of potential buyers who have expressed an interest.

"If that is the right route forward, there are no sacred cows," he said. Booker is now close to a sale of its 66 per cent interest in Agatha Christie Ltd, which owns rights to the famous detective tales, featuring Belgian Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple.

## Jakarta contract restored to Thames

David Gow

**T**HAMES Water International yesterday won back its lucrative contract to supply water to half of Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, after severing its links with a company controlled by the eldest son of the former dictator, President Suharto.

Last month, after Mr Suharto's enforced resignation, Thames lost the contract when it became the first foreign casualty of the new regime's campaign to strip the ex-president's family of their nepotistically-acquired assets, said to have totalled £20 billion during 32 years of Suharto rule.

Yesterday, insisting the contract had merely been put on hold, Thames announced it had signed an agreement with the Indonesian authorities to

resume "over the next few days" operational and administrative control of the water supply in the eastern half of Jakarta.

It dumped its partner, PT Kekarapola Airindo, chaired by Sigit Harjojudanto, Mr Suharto's eldest son, which had a 20 per cent shareholding in the joint venture.

Thames, which said Sigit's firm had provided local back-up in winning the contract, said it is seeking another partner. "Under Indonesian law all foreign firms had to have a minimum 5 per cent local holding and they all had links to the ex-president's family," a spokeswoman said.

She added: "What was right ten days ago has now changed and the partner arrangements have changed too. The real issue is the long-term viability of the contract."

### TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.61	Germany 2.5440	Malaysia 6.329	Singapore 2.71
Austria 19.98	Greece 488.71	Netherlands 3.1889	South Africa 8.29
Belgium 56.57	Hong Kong 12.33	New Zealand 3.05	Spain 129.08
Canada 2.33	India 68.31	Norway 12.02	Sweden 12.58
Cyprus 0.8372	Ireland 1.1259	Portugal 260.33	Switzerland 12.58
Denmark 10.86	Israel 5.988	Saudi Arabia 6.04	Turkey 402.450
Finland 8.718	Italy 2.820	USA 1.8024	
France 9.507			

Supplied by Reuters (excluding rupee, shekel and riyal)

سكرا من الامل















# SportsGuardian

## French Open: Swiss triumphs in battle of the 17-year-olds



It ends in tears... Venus Williams hit some 100mph shots but Hingis was up to speed. PHOTOGRAPHS: LAURENT REBOURS AND CLIVE BRUNSON

The world No.1 switches off the power of Venus Williams at Roland Garros

Stephen Bierley reports from Paris

## Hingis gives no quarter

**M**ARTINA HINGIS underlined her position as the undisputed Queen of the Centre Court of Roland Garros yesterday when she reached the semi-finals of the French Open with a compelling 6-3, 6-4 victory over Venus Williams.

These two 17-year-olds are currently rated the hottest properties in tennis, with the American striving to displace the Swiss at the top of the women's game.

The anticipation and tension were immense, with the packed Parisian crowd all too aware that they might be about to witness a shift of balance at the top.

A win for Williams and the sublime reign of Hingis as the world's No.1 would have been seen as under direct and immediate threat.

This was power versus craft, severity versus subtlety. Intermittently Williams hit winners of astonishing velocity and on occasions she served at well over 100 mph, but Hingis was a picture of composed excellence, one miserable first-set service game excepted.

Hingis will tomorrow play

Monica Seles, the former three-times French Open champion, for a place in Saturday's final.

Seles, whose father Karol died of stomach cancer three weeks ago, discovered something of her relentless form of old to defeat Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, and is clearly running high on emotion.

A year ago Hingis lost the final when Croatia's Iva Majoli ran her ragged. Hingis was still recovering from a riding accident at the time, and not fully fit, but Majoli provided a template for those hoping to beat the little Swiss wonder.

Williams immediately began to move Hingis from side to side and threatened to break her opening service game.

Significantly Hingis held firm and then took a 3-0 lead with the American displaying clear signs of nerves, much as she had last autumn in the US Open final which Hingis won in straight sets. At one point she actually dropped her racket while serving.

An excruciatingly poor service game by Hingis, including two double faults, saw

Williams close to 3-2 and animate a somewhat subdued crowd. Maybe they had simply over-lunched, which is a regular hazard at these championships.

If Williams had hoped Hingis would now be similarly sleepy she was to be disappointed.

A misjudgment by the American, allowing a Hingis cross-court shot to drop in, and then a stunning backhand pass, saw the No.1 re-establish a two-game lead, and run away with the first set.

A gusty wind did not help Williams's cause and two double faults midway through the second set saw Hingis make the decisive break.

With Hingis about to serve for the match, Williams took a bathroom break, which are fast becoming the bane of the game, and clearly being abused by certain players.

"It did not bother me," said Hingis. "It allowed me to relax while she had to walk there and back, which might have tired her."

A backhand error by Williams saw Hingis leaving the court clutching a white rose handed to her by a spectator.

In tomorrow's other semi-final Lindsay Davenport of the United States will play Arantxa Sanchez Vicario.

The Spaniard, twice champion here, defeated another Swiss player, Patty Schnyder, 6-2, 6-7, 6-0 while Davenport knocked out Majoli, the reigning champion, 6-1, 5-7, 6-3.



## Only a dream and now Gazumped



Paul Weaver

**P**LEASE do not take this the wrong way, dear reader, but you are a bloody fool. And so am I. So are we all, a bunch of chuckleheads the lot of us. Suddenly the decision made by Glenn Hoddle, following his little spleen-to-spleen with Paul Gascoigne, seems startlingly sensible, his logic irrefutable, his managerial authority restored after some worryingly wobbly weeks.

So why did we do it to ourselves? What possessed us ever to think that a footballer who can display the mentality of a lager lout and the physique of an aspiring sumo wrestler, could ever win us the World Cup?

I do not wish to have a go at the downwardly mobile Gazza, even if he has slurped enough hooch to make Rabelais wince and float Hoddle's entire squad down the Swansea. I do not wish to have a go at Gazza because the queue is a long one and the rotten-fruit-and-stones stalls are busier than Oxford Street in Christmas week.

Besides, we know all about the booze and the fags and the girl that follows like an America's Cup syndicate. We know, too, that he is at an age when it becomes difficult to burn the candle at even one end.

No, forget about Gazza because we all know he is a bloody fool and, anyway, I want to talk about us and why we hitch our dreams to any old broken-down wagon that rolls along.

The anger we feel today, the sense of being betrayed by a footballer with a liking for moonshine and rowdy mates, is really directed at ourselves because we have duped ourselves.

We watched Gascoigne struggle with Rangers and toll with Middlesbrough and bluff and puff with England in Castellana while his flesh peeled away from his bones like a piece of Kleenex.

Nigeria were among other countries who announced their squads before last night's midnight deadline. Bora Milutinovic, their sixth coach since the last World Cup, said: "I have never had so many good players trying to make the team."

Leonardo Rocha, page 14

## Romario ruled out of World Cup

**I**NJURY has put Brazil's Romario out of the World Cup, leaving the champions with only three specialist strikers.

Romario, a key figure in Brazil's triumph in the United States in 1994, had two scans on his damaged right calf at the weekend and they revealed that it would take up to a month to heal.

News of Romario's withdrawal came as Brazil prepared for today's warm-up match against Andorra. He

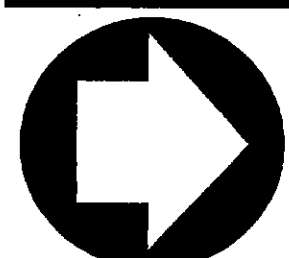
has been replaced in the squad by an inexperienced defensive midfielder, Emerson Ferreira of Bayer Leverkusen.

Nigeria were among other countries who announced their squads before last night's midnight deadline. Bora Milutinovic, their sixth coach since the last World Cup, said: "I have never had so many good players trying to make the team."

Leonardo Rocha, page 14

## TranSport by Nicky Clarke

1 Remove clothing. 2 Remove partner's clothing. 3 Grab a pack of Nicky Clarke Sport Protein Shampoo from the new Sport range. 4 Massage into wet hair the rich, conditioning combination of Vitamin E, Wheat protein and Pro Vitamin B5. 5 Rinse. 6 Enjoy. Don't get carried away.

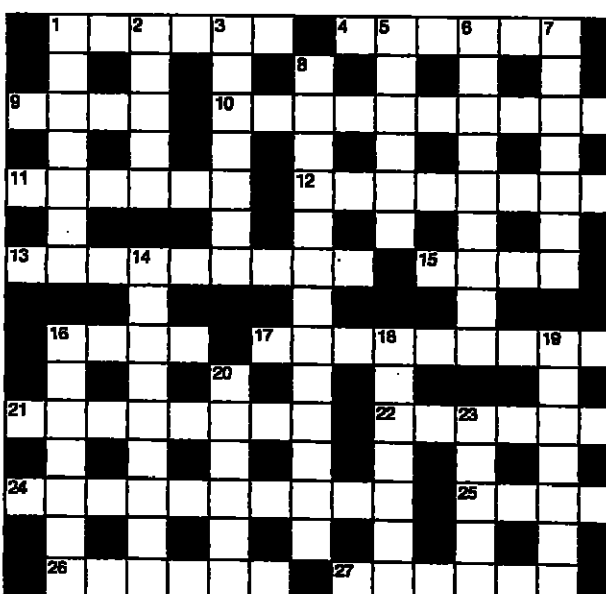


**The suspicion is that Baddiel and Skinner's two basic jokes about footballers — bad haircuts and missed penalties — stretched over 16 shows will be spread Marmite-thin. Martin Kelner on the battle for World Cup viewers**

## G2 cover story

## Guardian Crossword No 21,291

Set by Paul

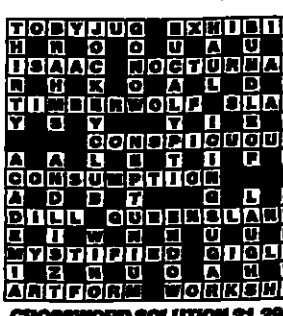


### Across

- 1 Mum is spinning 16 across, perhaps (6)
- 4 To take on water, possibly, is sailor's sphere (5)
- 9 Cunning as a 16 down, perhaps (4)
- 10 Worryingly, poison present at a very high level (10)
- 11 Infer the Church is savage (6)
- 12 Cold in central Italy comes from northern England (8)
- 13 Silver girl gridlocked and upset (5)
- 15 Girl runs into another (4)
- 16 Secure, as wrapped in newspaper (4)
- 17 US military order for a fight at the front (5,4)
- 21 Furious if centre's vandalised (8)

### Down

- 2 Shop for a year and one dies for a cause (8)
- 24 Order of beetles, cabbage stew or pâté? (10)
- 25 Hussey wants animals for 16 down, we hear? (4)
- 26 Amin's arrest by Heath is ordered (5)
- 27 Position achieved by difficult ascent (6)
- 28 Shop for a year and one dies for a cause (8)
- 29 Order of beetles, cabbage stew or pâté? (10)
- 30 Hussey wants animals for 16 down, we hear? (4)
- 31 Amin's arrest by Heath is ordered (5)
- 32 Position achieved by difficult ascent (6)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,290

- 8 Glory of the short trouser? (13)
- 14 Smelly plant has awfully weird nose (8)
- 15 Many will die for a rich woman's warmth (3,4)
- 16 Shamefully mate with nun by mistake (7)
- 19 Longing to have corporal punishment without capital in South America (7)
- 20 Connects paper plates, petals or plants, possibly? (6)
- 23 Capitalist managed to keep order (5)

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22 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 138 238. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATIS.

